

HOW TO REACH ANGRY,
UNMOTIVATED TEENS
WITH BIBLICAL COUNSEL

GET OUTTA MY FACE!



RICK HORNE

Get Outta My Face- A detailed Review and summary

Let me first say that this book is very good and has amazing nuggets to attach to our relationships with teens. Whether you are a parent, Youth worker, Youth Counselor or any other person who works with, deals with or lives with teens, this book is very helpful.

This book is written for people dealing with teens who are angry and unmotivated. It's about those teens who seemingly listen like rocks and yell like bears and how to deal and communicate with those certain teens.

I enjoyed the Biblical integration as well as the practicality of all the tools Rick brings in this book. I have set out to "lighten" the load a bit in this review so that you, the reader of this review can obtain the general idea as well as a fair few nuggets from this book without actually having to buy it and read the full thing yourself. Although the book is well written and has amazing content, it can easily be summed up and understood easily through that summary. If you find that this summary is not sufficient enough and you would like to read it yourself, I more than encourage you to do so. We (ACAC Student Ministries) have 5 copies available for you to borrow, read and return. Or if you are so moved, you can purchase it here: <http://www.shepherdpress.com/product.php?productid=16234>

I am thrilled to highlight some of the great key points that Rick Horne brings here in this summary. I know that a large portion of what I read here will be applied in my personal interactions with the teens I interact with! I will go chapter by chapter and overview each chapter as well as highlight key points that are noteworthy. I hope you enjoy the review/summary and I pray that God will use this tool to assist you as you wade in the murky, muddy waters that are the days of the adolescent.

Section I -*What You Must Understand to Connect with Your Teen*

Chapter 1- *There is Good Reason for Hope*

This chapter discusses several important factors when it comes to initiating conversations with hard-to-get-along-with teens. I was pleasantly surprised at the candor of Rick throughout the book and his willingness to discuss issues that he himself had obviously failed at. He brings over 30 years of experience to the book and that type of experience shows throughout the entire thing! Here are some highlights and quotes that are good take-aways from this chapter and I hope you find helpful.

Illustration: Rick writes of a scene in the old Cosby show where one of Cosby's daughters brings home a guy who is her fiancé. The catch is the family didn't even know she was dating and had no idea who this guy was. Cosby notes that the guy is very well spoken and he is quite impressed with the young man, but he has this nagging issue with the young man that he then discusses with the "fiancé of his daughter". He shares that no matter how good the guy is, the way he was presented to the family was an immediate turn off. He was introduced as their future son-in-law and they had never met him before. Cosby then likens it to a great steak dinner put on a used garbage can lid. It's a GREAT dinner, but the presentation would turn anyone off.

Rick in the book uses this little illustration to demonstrate the importance of a great presentation when it comes to having deep, serious or otherwise important conversations with our teens. If we have a poor presentation with them, no matter how good the content is, the message will not be received (or well received) because our method of presentation was all wrong.

Rick then shares "keys to presentation" as I will call them:

"Teens will quickly detect Mom's, Dad's, or any counselor's genuineness by their humility. Let us recall that we are weak people speaking to other weak people, who simply happen to be younger than us." (Horne, 2009, p. 23)

"Point to his [your teens] strength by being willing to admit your weakness" (Horne, 2009, p. 23)

Rick then outlines the 2nd half of the book when he highlights the acronym that will anchor that last half:

L is for Listening Big

C is for Clarify Narrow

L is for Look Wide

P is for Plan Small

Chapter 2- Understanding Your Teen Biblically

This chapter is deeply practical because it is a chapter on how to reframe our teens and ourselves in our eyes. Sometimes, we forget that we too are flawed when dealing with teens. We get locked into thinking we are always right and they are always wrong, so we neglect the art of listening or understanding. This chapter seeks to get us to put the bigger picture back into focus so we can teach, and have conversation with a new frame of mind. Rick brings what he calls “Eight Biblical Lenses for Seeing Our Angry Teens Clearly. Below are those 8 lenses with some commentary from me here and there.

1. *Teens, just like parents and counselors, are sinners*

“If we understand that our teen’s self-absorbed choices, as well as our own, give birth to our “quarrels” and “fights”, three very good things happen. We can stop being defensive. We can stop being idealistic. We can stop being hopeless.” (Horne, 2009, p. 30) (This is in response to a reading of James 4:1-2)

2. *Teens can be respected as young adults*

“When a parent interacts with an angry young person...the parent may include large doses of affirmation about the identity [they] have as a young adult.” (Horne, 2009, p. 32)

3. *Common grace, God’s general goodness to all, allows any sinner to make some wise choices*

4. *God’s goodness accounts for “wise wants” that lie (often deeply) within our teens.*

“By common grace, there is in everyone some measure of respect for virtue.” (Horne, 2009, p. 33)

5. *Help that brings about change in angry teens often begins at a surface level but must aim deeper.*

6. *Teens can and must think about their choices in light of goals and consequences.*

“...nearly 700 times Proverbs urges teens to think about their choices in light of the positive and negative outcomes of their decisions.” (Horne, 2009, p. 36)

7. *Scriptural principles cover both how to speak and what to say to angry, unmotivated teens.*

8. *God gives us others to support us and help us counsel our teens*

“Where there is no guidance, a people falls, but in an abundance of counselors, there is safety.” (Proverbs 11:14)

Rick ends this chapter with a powerful story of a famous violinist who went into a subway to play his grand music. However, he went in the form of a street violinist and no one knew what they were listening to. They saw what they expected to see...a bum playing the violin for money...and they missed it! He asks this question in the end: “What will you *expect* to see the next time you talk with your angry teen?” (Horne, 2009, p. 41) (emphasis mine).

Chapter 3- Wise Wants

This chapter is built on the premise that underneath most things teens do, whether they are angry or unmotivated there are “wise wants.” These wise wants are good things they truly desire. The problem is that most teens don’t know how to articulate these wise wants, nor do they know the appropriate way to obtain them. This chapter goes in depth to assist us (those who work with teens) to dig into the kids with a gentle probe to seek and find what and where these wise wants are hiding.

Rick discusses that Jesus and the Proverbs are always asking: “What do you want?” This is the penetrating question that teens need to hear us ask. The problem is that most times we assume what it is they want (and most of the time assume wrong) and don’t allow them the air time to share what’s going on. This assumption in turn communicates that we only care that they follow our “wants” and that we could care less about their wants. Rick encourages us in this chapter to see that we may have it wrong and to seek what the wise want may be. (On pages 46-47 Rick outlines some of the “wise wants” teens may have)

“ The goal of this book is to equip you to help your teens grasp the things about themselves that God wants them to notice just as Jesus and Solomon intended their hearers to grow in their understanding of wisdom for their lives.” (Horne, 2009, p. 50)

“The blind men whom Jesus healed remind us that it is legitimate to start our counsel with what needy people *want*. Our deep desire is to see our teens change because of love for Christ. However, the counsel that leads a disinterested or angry teen toward godly motives and choices usually cannot begin at a deep, heart level. If you begin your conversation by reviewing their wise wants, that will probably do more than just get their attention. It will likely give both of you the ability to talk respectfully to one another and actually be heard.” (Horne, 2009, p. 51)

This is a GREAT springboard for discussion with our teens: “What do you want?”

Chapter 4- Your Stance- Determine to Glorify God

This chapter is all about focusing in on the Glory of God. Taking in the reality of who He is and what He has done for us. When we put the lenses of God's glory on, we can better see our teens and their situations. Not only can we see differently, but we will tend to act differently because we will be more like God: gracious and merciful. When we put on the lenses of God's glory, the situation doesn't seem as daunting, or threatening or all that burdensome. Our God is a BIG God and Rick takes large strides in this chapter to remind us of that.

To begin the topic of focusing on God's Glory, Rick challenges us with big questions.

"Why does your family exist? What is your shared purpose? What actually is the goal of that complex web of interpersonal relationships, obligations, and experiences?" (Horne, 2009, p. 55) Rick reminds us that we should be more of a "middle parent" not forcing peace, but not allowing ridiculous amounts of conflict, but a well balanced middle. Focusing on the Glory of God assists in that! Rick also has 5 outcomes of focusing on God's Glory, they are below.

- 1. *Focusing on God's glory will help protect you from fear and intimidation in the face of your teen's threats***
- 2. *Focusing on God's glory will give you boldness and courage, should it come time to make difficult decisions.***
- 3. *Focusing on God's glory will clothe you with humility and openness to see your own failures and sins more clearly***
- 4. *Focusing on God's glory will energize you with confidence and hope as you continue to live faithfully with other members of your family, your church, and your world***
- 5. *Focusing on God's glory will make your prayers biblical and effective***

"But whatever the outcome, by praying in this way you will be honoring God, subduing your own desire for your glory and your will to be done, and appealing to the Father for his intervention according to the very guidance he's given in His Word. You will be glorifying God and employing the most powerful weapon available for your spiritual warfare as you approach your angry or unmotivated teen." (Horne, 2009, p. 65)

Chapter 5- Your Stance- Remember the Log in Your Own Eye

This chapter was all about seeing yourself rightly before coming at your teen. This was one of my favorite chapters because it brought everything back into a perspective of reality. So many times we can look down on our teens for their poor decisions and we forget that we had (or are) doing the very same thing. Most of what teens get is more “caught” than “taught” meaning they attach more of what they see us doing than what they hear us saying...scary thought isn't it? We can't always bring an attitude of I'm right and you're wrong when it comes to teens, we have to admit our mistakes and our failures so we can better communicate with our teens.

Rick goes into great depth about us as sinners, because we indeed are sinners. He lays out some great stuff in this chapter and below I will again summarize those key points and add some commentary where necessary.

- 1. Acknowledging your own sinfulness can help you take a humble approach, as one sinner speaking to another.***
- 2. Acknowledging your own sinfulness will make you a realistic model of how a needy person can admit his failures and move on to make better choices***
- 3. Acknowledging your own sinfulness will often invite mutual confession by your angry teen***
This is, for me the most hard-hitting piece of advice in the whole book. I believe all of what Rick says in this book are true, but this one is a GREAT nugget to add to your tool belt when dealing with teens. You may not realize it but teens have you on a pedestal and sometimes, we need to knock ourselves off of it. Confessing to them when we've wronged them will speak volumes to them and will indeed invite them to do the same. This can add a ton of healing to broken relationships!
- 4. Acknowledging your own sinfulness can help you be thoughtful, just, and realistic about actions you need to take or support***
- 5. Acknowledging your own sinfulness can help demonstrate the richness and freedom that comes with Christ's forgiveness and acceptance***

“ Angry teens often feel frustrated and overwhelmed by their circumstances. But as sinners saved by grace, we can stop relying on ourselves to make everything turn out well...The sure and certain hope of the gospel, for tomorrow and eternity, can be powerfully communicated to our teens through our expressions of humble reliance on God.” (Horne, 2009, p. 75)

Section II -*What You Must Do to Help Your Teen*

Chapter 6- Listen Big- to Build a Bridge to Your Teen

This chapter was all about the importance of listening to your teens, really listening not just “listening”. It is a chapter full of amazing content and good advice. He give 5 “pylons” that we need to follow in order to “listen big”. These pylons summarize the whole chapter well, so below I have listed them with some additional quotes to anchor them a bit deeper.

First Pylon: Listen by Echoing Your Teen’s Feelings with Your “Quatements”

I love this piece of advice. “ “Quatements” are statements that are spoken somewhat like questions. To be effective, they must be sensitive to a teen’s thoughts, feelings, fears, disappointments, or frustrations.” (Horne, 2009, p. 82) An example of a good quatement is: “I give you the impression that nothing you do is good enough.” Said with gentleness and respect, but showing that you understand what they’re saying.

Second Pylon: Listen for What Your Teen Does NOT Want

Third Pylon: Listen to Your Teen’s Body Language, and Listen with Your Own

This pylon is best served by following a helpful acronym that Rick gives: **R-E-S-O-L-V-E**

R- Relax; E- Enjoy; S- Sit at an angle; O- Open Stance (don’t communicate closedness); **L- Lean** (lean forward to listen); **V- Voice; E- Eye Contact**

Fourth Pylon: Listen to Affirm, Not Necessarily to Agree

Fifth Pylon: Listen Until You See the Paradoxes

“You can help them by pointing out the paradoxical fact that despite this problem- so massive in their own eyes- they are still coping with daily life.” (Horne, 2009, p. 90)

Chapter 7- Clarify Narrow- Expose the Realities of Your Teen's Experience

Narrowing big ideas for teens and giving them clarity is a huge part of this chapter. Rick says: "There are five realities that potentially need to be clarified in the life of your teen. Not every point from this material will need to be clarified in every case." (Horne, 2009, p. 98)

Making sense of these things with your teen is highly important and supremely beneficial. Below are the five realities that need to be clarified.

1. Wise Wants

"...beneath the surface of actions and thinking are good desires that God has hardwired into teens. Teens will respond to adults who can identify these. A clear view of them will give the young person the energy to make changes, sometimes radical and rapid changes." (Horne, 2009, p. 98)

"One good way to discover what a teen wants...is to ask! When the communication bridge is in place, and your teen thinks you know what he or she does *not* want, you can just get to the point: "What do you want?"" (Horne, 2009, p. 99)

2. The Power of Choosing

"Teens have the ability to make real choices which have real outcomes." (Horne, 2009, p. 98)

The need to communicate you trust your teen and that they have the power to make choices is key.

3. The Pain of Choosing Poorly

With the power of making choices is the truth of the matter: some choices will be poorly chosen. Clarifying this is huge and must be done gently. "Be careful not to *tell* your teen how she feels...Instead allow her own words and meanings to paint the picture of how she's feeling, the loss she's experiencing, and the pain she's enduring." (Horne, 2009, p. 110) 2 Key things to remember at this reality: **Echo how the pain is expressed** and **Keep their pain in front of them.**

4. The Question of Control

5. Relationship with Christ

Our ultimate goal should be constantly pointing back to Christ for everything. In our discussions with our teens, this should be no different. It is NOT however a tool for manipulation as can be easily used but its a point of teaching and learning on both the teen and us.

"My prayer will be that, in time, he will see the richness of his wise choices, he will note that the outcomes of those choices are what God designed life to be like, and he will consider his need to submit to Christ and the gospel for all of his life." (Horne, 2009, p. 117)

Chapter 8- Look Wide- Discover Your Teen's Solutions

"The core of this chapter involves searching through your teen's past for "exceptions." The goal is to identify a time when the teen behaved in a way that would seem atypical now, but which resulted in a wise want being met." (Horne, 2009, p. 121)

I can't summarize this chapter any better than the author himself. Looking into the past and picking out those "exceptions" is a huge part of getting your teen back on track, or at least seeing how wise choices helped to have good outcomes. Below are some key points that Rick brought to the forefront of this chapter. They are pretty straightforward so I will leave them as they are.

The Search for Exceptions

Exceptions are solutions from the past that produced desirable outcomes

Exceptions emerge from God's providence

Exceptions can be found in the teen's experiences

"The past offers abundant examples of wise choices your teens have made. You can identify many of them by asking your teens to think about a time in the past when the conflict or unpleasantness they are experiencing now was not a problem." (Horne, 2009, p. 125)

Exceptions can be found in unexpected places

How can I use exceptions with my angry teen?

Ask your teen to think back

Profusely "blame" your teen for making wise choices

Reemphasize that only different behavior will produce a different outcome

Allow resistance to signal that you may be pushing your own solution, not your teen's

Chapter 9- Plan Small Support The Changes Your Teen Wants

Now your teen has heard you out and there is some healthy communication going on, so much so that your teen sees the need for change as you have as well. How do you get this change underway? How can you help your teen make significant strides towards the change they see they need? This chapter answers those questions.

“How do you eat an elephant? One fork-full at a time! Living with an angry teen gives parents lots of changes to pray for—elephant-size changes. Keep praying. But the plan you help your teen develop must be incremental. It needs to have a one-fork-full focus.” (Horne, 2009, p. 137)

Below are some highlights from this chapter on how to help this one-fork-full at a time changing process. Help develop the plan of change with your teen’s input; which means, don’t make the plan and make them follow it...give them some input.

The Plan must be feasible, which gives hope

The Plan must be specific, which creates realism

The Plan must be measurable, which adds motivation

Measurability does not have to be threatening

Measurability helps avoid generalizations and negative plans

Section III –How to Make the Changes Stick

Chapter 10- Keep the Conversation Going in the Right Direction

This chapter is short and sweet and is a reminder that once we've gotten this far in the process: don't return to the bad habits we had that negatively affected our communication with our teens! Below are some pointers Rick brings to the forefront on how to achieve the art of remaining in the right direction.

Your opening question is crucial

“Our temptation, and here I am speaking of both parents and teens, is to be problem-centered in our follow-up discussions...Our opening questions have often encouraged this self-defeating approach by emphasizing points of failure...Therefore, the opening question of these follow-up conversations is absolutely crucial in setting the tone and direction of the conversation.” (Horne, 2009, p. 155) The suggestion is to start POSITIVE and go from there. Highlight what the teen is doing right!

Stay Focused on Exceptions and Solutions

“Questions that are phrased positively focus on the value and the promise of the teen's plan, not the challenges and difficulties of the teen's problems. With just a small shift in your thinking, you can ask questions that encourage hopefulness...” (Horne, 2009, p. 156)

Chapter 11- Point Your Teen to the Cross

Although this chapter is as short as chapter 10, its meaning echoes throughout our lives. Our main goal as youth workers, parents and anyone else who works with teens is to point them to Jesus. In all we think, say and do we should be concentrating on pointing them to Jesus. We can't fix, change or make our teens do anything without the help of Jesus. He is the key and the cornerstone that makes all things possible. Rick in this concluding chapter (which is a chapter that is laced throughout the book) gives some wise insight on how to point our teens to the cross.

Many of us have some roadblocks that hinder us from pointing to Christ those are:

The false assurance of rapid results

We want God to take control and fix everything right now. When He doesn't we get bitter and forget to look at the cross.

The Snare of and exclusively external focus

The church as a whole tends to care more about the outside of the cup rather than the inside. When our kids act out, we are less worried about their hearts and more worried about what other people think of us as parents. This is not a good trend. We must care about our teens hearts and focus on their hearts getting affected by God rather than the behavior alone.

The illusion of self sufficiency

We try to do it on our own and we will always fall short.

The neglect of repentance

We must confess our sins so that we can be cleansed from all unrighteousness (1 John 1:9). This then will help us refocus on the cross and get our minds off of ourselves!

This book was a great read and I encourage you to read it if this summary/review was not enough. Many parents have struggled with communicating with their teens, especially if their teen is angry and unmotivated. This book is an amazing resource to grab a hold of and begin to utilize in our communications with teens. We here at ACAC Student Ministries pray that this resource helps you and is a great tool for you to begin to use.