



See the Emotion Behind the Behavior

with Will Hutcherson

DISCUSSION

1. If you participated in youth ministry or other church-based youth groups as a teenager, what was that experience like? How big an impact did it make on your life? Did it seem to be primarily focused on “don’ts”—don’t have sex, don’t listen to rock music, etc? Or did your ministry leaders make an effort to relate to you and your peers as you faced pressures?
2. How would you describe your relationship with your parents during your teenage years? Were they relatable and approachable, or was there frequent conflict in your household? What were your conflicts usually about? Is the phrase “You just don’t understand!” one you remember using frequently as a teen?
3. What’s your typical response when one of your kids is having an emotional meltdown? Do you make an effort to understand what is behind the meltdown, or do you find yourself reacting negatively to how they’re expressing themselves? How do these emotional episodes typically unfold in your home?
4. Will explained the science behind teen emotions—from the disconnect between the left and right sides of the brain to the consequences of having less face-to-face contact than earlier generations of young people. Did these explanations make sense to you? Do they help you understand your own children’s emotions and idiosyncrasies a little better?

5. When you're with your male friends, do you feel comfortable simply talking and relaxing? Or do you need an activity to feel connected, like golfing, fishing, or watching a game? Do those activities help deepen your friendships, or do they sometimes keep the conversations surface level? How does that dynamic play out with your family, especially during downtime or on vacations? Are you truly connecting or just staying busy?
6. How important is it to you to raise children who are strong and resilient? Do you ever hesitate to engage with your children's emotions because you are afraid of coddling them or making them "soft"? Where do you think that reluctance comes from? Were you raised in a household that viewed emotional expression as a weakness? After hearing Will's perspective, do you feel more open to leading with empathy instead of immediately stepping into the role of disciplinarian?
7. How would you describe your "family culture"? What are some of the values or standards you see as non-negotiable for you, your wife, and your children? How have you tried to instill the importance of those values in your kids?

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

Seen: Healing Despair and Anxiety in Kids and Teens Through the Power of Connection
by Will Hutcherson and Chinwé Williams

Beyond the Spiral: Why You Shouldn't Believe Everything Anxiety Tells You
by Will Hutcherson and Chinwé Williams