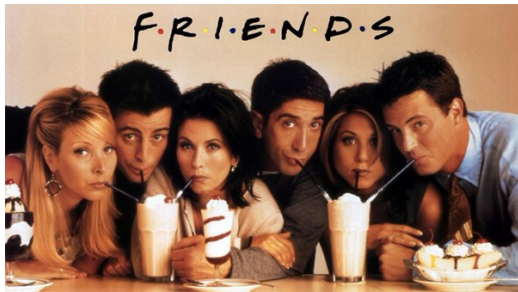


## THE SILENT PAUSE:

Even more important than language is the lack of language. The well placed pause. Sometimes it means a break from the conversation sometimes it might mean a break from one another. The power of a pause is an opportunity to move from being reactive to proactive. From destructive to constructive. This is not easy for adults let alone a child. Everyone wants to belong and for kids this idea of taking a break threatens their sense of belonging.

A child who has lots of friends in lots of different groups, in and out of school, will cope better with the idea of taking a break from a friendship that needs some work. As parents we need to encourage a wide range of friends. Kids may like the idea of a BFF, but the reality can be complicated.



## ACCEPTANCE:

Not all conflicts can be resolved. Some friends won't try and others prefer to have conflict. Some people like conflict. All we can do is help our kids sit with that realization, grieve the loss of the friendship and move forward.

We will all have many friends over the course of a lifetime and that BFF may just be a 'BFF for now.'



Tools that will allow you to grow and flourish



Supporting WA school communities

*YouthCARE Chaplains care for the social, emotional, mental and spiritual wellbeing of students, families and staff in public school communities throughout Western Australia. This support helps students achieve their potential, both academically and in their social and family lives.*

*Chaplains are qualified in pastoral care and youth work. They respect all people, no matter who they are, where they're from or what their personal belief system is. If asked to do so, chaplains will discuss spiritual matters with a person, in a way that best serves that person.*

Cheers

Deb Crilly

Chaplain

## C H O I C E's



## Tools for Life



Learning to live life well

***We all have choices. Sometimes we do not like the choices we need to make. It would be a mistake though to believe one does not have a choice just because they do not like the choice they might need to make. To do so leaves one feeling powerless and helpless.***

## FRIENDSHIP OR FRIENDSHOCK!??

Sometimes as parents we can flippantly dismiss teenage conflict as “drama” or “teenage stuff”. Indeed teenagers do encounter a lot of friendship issues. Of course they do!! At this time in their social development they are figuring out where they fit and their friendships are a big part of that process.

Like us, teenagers can have unrealistic expectations of their friendships. Some of these misperceptions are reinforced with FB posts that are essentially romantic odes to our friends. Think about this one, “Best friends are the ones you rarely see but nothing ever changes.” GARBAGE! All relationships change and evolve. We grow out of people, we take breaks from people and we have conflict with people. Don’t we? That’s normal. Our kids need to know about that, and we need to talk to them about that. Otherwise they perceive every conflict they have with a friend as an epic failure that can’t possibly be salvaged.



Our kids need to know that healthy friendships have some key ingredients. That means they will need to know that conflict is a normal part of life.

Conflict has as much potential to have a positive outcome as it does to have a negative outcome. In fact healthy relationships are not relationships that are devoid of conflict. Healthy relationships result when both parties have learned the skills to resolve and learn from conflict.

Our teenagers are at a stage in their development where they are very impulsive and reactive. They will say inappropriate things and overreact to the things that they hear. They are driven primarily from

the flight/fight part of their brain. Logic has a great deal of competition here.

Of course this is complicated by the fact that a lot of modern teenage conflict happens online. We all know there is a safety in saying things from a distance. You don’t have to see the pain they experience at your hands, there is no feedback to trigger compassion, like tears and hurt. Add to this that these conflicts are then shared with others online and sides are taken. Messages are taken out of context and the conflict gathers momentum.

As role models in our children’s lives, it is our responsibility to model healthy relationships. It is our responsibility to model healthy conflict resolution skills.



From a schools perspective your child’s involvement in and experience of conflict can have an impact on their education:

- **FOCUS:** How can your child focus on what is happening in math classes when they are thinking about the argument that happened at recess?
- **PHYSICAL:** People who experience a lot of conflict also experience stress related illnesses that lead to poor attendance.
- **EMOTIONAL:** School need’s to be a safe place. No one can learn and grow when they do not feel safe.



Often when teenagers find themselves caught in conflict situations, they find it hard to de-escalate or calm the situation. This is where parents and teachers come in. It is our responsibility to give kids the tools needed to stop and resolve conflict or at least minimize it. Most conflict is resolved with effective language and timing.

### LANGUAGE:

Having a practiced automated script ready during heated moments can assist in slowing everything down enough to give you time to think. Phrases like:

- I’m feeling really hurt, can we start over?
- I need a moment. I want to sort this out but I need to think.
- Let’s agree to disagree.
- We might be misunderstanding each other here. Let’s just stop for a minute.
- Hang on, can we start again?
- I’m feeling uncomfortable. Can we stop for a minute?
- Can we stop for a minute? We are going to figure out a way to make this right.
- Hang on. Let’s just backtrack. What’s our actual problem?

### SORRY:

Sometimes we actually need to say we are sorry. We all make mistakes and sometimes speak without thinking. Having language ready to apologise can help.

- I am sorry for.....
- It was wrong because.....
- Next time I will .....

As adults, we need to apologise to kids when we get it wrong. Kids need to learn from us that apologising makes you strong not weak.

