“Button Pushing Cycle”
Summary from Scott Sell’s materials: Treating the Touch Adolescent

Teen misbehaves

Parent responds – to correct misbehavior

Parent ‘ups the Ante’ on the parent by using the “parent’s” button pushers.

Parent often responds to the button pushing with one of his/her own “teen” button pushers.

Teen and Parent increase the conflict by ‘upping the Ante’ often by more button pushing.

Parent looses control and matches behaviors of the child.

No one wins in this situation.
Everyone walks away feeling bad and problems do not get resolved.
Teen is often “rewarded” by learning the benefits of button pushing, and misbehavior re-occurs.

Parent Alert:
Important to note while this behaviour appears to be personal, the teen has just learned over time how effective it is at getting them what they want.

Parent Alert:
Important to note most of us don’t push our teen’s buttons to hurt them, usually we think this will stop the behaviour or drive our point home.

Top 8 Teen Button Pushers:
1. Nagging and using clichés.
2. Talking in chapters.
3. Labeling
4. Futurizing
5. Instant Problem-solving without listening.
6. Questioning your teen’s restlessness and discontent.
7. Not tolerating “normal, developmentally” appropriate behaviors.
8. A criticism of teen or teen’s friends.

Top 10 Parent Button Pushers:
1. “You never let me do anything.”
2. “You don’t love me”
3. “I hate you/this family.”
4. Swearing or Verbal abuse.
5. ‘You are not my real father/mother, I don’t have to listen to you.’
6. A disgusted look, improper gesture, or whiney voice.
7. “I’m going to hurt myself, your or someone else.”
8. Lying.
9. “I’ll just run away.”
10. “I won’t and you can’t make me.”