Decisions Decisions

Teenagers are known for making bad decisions. We think we can decide on things without help from our parental units. I know from personal experience that sometimes we need them. Think about the lives of Romeo and Juliet. They were young lovers that went against their parents and ended up getting themselves killed. Decision making is extremely difficult in the lives of young adults, and if we knew more about why we do what we do, then we might made better decisions in the future.

Teenagers are technically handicapped. Our prefrontal cortex isn’t fully developed. A prefrontal cortex is the section of the cortex that is in the front of the brain, behind the forehead. It is responsible for high thinking tasks complex decision making skills, and reasoning. So, you can’t really blame us for making bad decisions. We are hindered!

Romeo and Juliet showed some evidence that their prefrontal cortexes had not developed yet. Romeo went to the Capulet’s party, even though he knew he wasn’t allowed there. Romeo and Juliet also got married without telling their parents. “The exchange of thy loves faithful vow for mine.” Romeo (2.2.127) This caused later problems for Juliet, whose parents arranged another marriage for her not knowing she was already married. Clearly, they weren’t using their not-fully-developed prefrontal cortexes.

The prefrontal cortex isn’t the only part of the brain we can blame. The limbic system also plays a big role in decision making. The limbic system recognizes emotions and linking those emotions to various brain functions. Sometimes our limbic system overrides our prefrontal cortex. Our limbic system is almost 100% developed by the teenage years. This is part of the reason teens are so impulsive.

Romeo and Juliet let their limbic system take over their prefrontal cortex at times. On the first night they met they made marriage plans, on the second day they got married, and by the fifth day they were both dead. They were both impulsive, and it ended in death for them. “Well, Juliet, I will lie with thee tonight.” –Romeo (5.2.34)

Decision making is vitally important in the teen years. I believe that a lot of the reasons we, as teens, make bad decisions is because we don’t know how to make a good one. I have figured out an easy four-step method that works for me.

**Step One**: Take a deep breath. When you are mad you make decisions that you later regret.

**Step Two**: Think about the situation. Think about everyone who is involved, and how it will affect them.

**Step Three**: Think about what the right thing to do is. Would your parents be proud of you for doing it? Will it be something that you later regret?

**Step Four**: Carefully make your decision.

Even though our decisions might not end in death, they could still have some major consequences. Decision making is proven to be harder for teens, but with help of some wise adults, you can learn to make better choices. Learning how your brain works can help us realize why we do what we do. Teenagers are known for making bad decisions; however, maybe we can change that.

Works Cited

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