



## The Real Reason “Not Spending” Doesn’t Work!

My daughter is growing like a weed. She was upset because, yet again, she is giving away her nice clothes that she’s out grown. This time she was upset because she’s been working and saving her money and has been very strategic about her ‘name brand’ purchases. She started down the road that many parents have heard before, “I need...” when I asked her a couple simple questions that immediately changed the direction of the conversation.

I knew that the ‘needs’ of a teen growing up in the environment that she has will be very different from the ‘needs’ of other teens in other neighborhoods or the ‘needs’ of teens in other countries so I didn’t go down the road of trying to tell her that there is a difference between ‘need’ and ‘want’.

I first empathized by saying how frustrating it is when something you really like and have spent good money on is no longer of use – I was thinking of the times when I’d accidentally mixed the colors in the laundry and turned a nice white top pink for example.

Then I asked why it was important to her and she said it makes her feel and look good. Okay, then I asked if there was any other way she could replace the ‘name brand’ pants with a no-name brand at less money? Her response was “yes, but...”

Okay, so what was it about the name brand pants that made her feel better? As predicted, the response wasn’t well articulated, but basically because ‘everyone else’ had them and because they looked better.

Next in the line of questioning was “what were the consequences of not having the name brand pants?” Which brought up another “yes, but” type of answer, but one which you could see required some thinking. And then things changed when I asked, “How could you find more money to pay for another pair of the name brand pants, and other name brand items that you’d like?” The answer I got is the reason why rationalizing and cutting back isn’t a real solution. She told me she would see about working more to earn more money so she could buy the name brand items she felt good in. And, until she stopped growing, it was okay to choose some less expensive comparable items and splurge on the ‘name brand’ ones that were good quality and would last even with more growth.

I think the lesson in all this is a good one: to explore why it is that you want the things that you do. If you are aware of your true desires (however seemingly unimportant to other people) then you make decisions and plans that are coming from a place of knowledge in yourself. This self-knowledge then becomes the motivation to find a solution to bringing them into your life in a responsible, supportive way rather than sacrificing and rationalizing your goals and dreams away. Regardless of the item of desire, my teenage daughter is now looking for ways to create income so she can wear nice name brand clothes that make her feel confident and good about herself. What a great incentive and reward, and reminder, of setting a goal and making it happen.

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