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*Instructor’s Manual for Adolescent Family Therapy*  
with Janet Sasson Edgette, PsyD

Cover design by Sabine Grand

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Instructor’s Manual for

ADOLESCENT FAMILY THERAPY

with Janet Sasson Edgette, PsyD

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Tips for Making the Best Use of the DVD

1. USE THE TRANSCRIPTS
Make notes in the video Transcript for future reference; the next time you show the video you will have them available. Highlight or notate key moments in the video to better facilitate discussion during the video and post-viewing.

2. GROUP DISCUSSION QUESTIONS
Pause the video at different points to elicit viewers’ observations and reactions to the concepts presented. The Discussion Questions provide ideas about key points that can stimulate rich discussions and learning.

3. LET IT FLOW
Allow the session to play out some so viewers can appreciate the work over time instead of stopping the video too often. It is best to watch the video in its entirety since issues untouched in earlier parts often play out later. Encourage viewers to voice their opinions; no therapy is perfect! What do viewers think works and does not work in the session? We learn as much from our mistakes as our successes and it is crucial for students and therapists to develop the ability to effectively critique this work as well as their own.

4. SUGGEST READINGS TO ENRICH VIDEO MATERIAL
Assign readings from Suggestions for Further Readings and Websites prior to viewing. You can also time the video to coincide with other course or training materials on related topics.

5. ASSIGN A REACTION PAPER
See suggestions in Reaction Paper section.

6. ROLE-PLAY IDEAS
After watching the video, organize participants into groups of three or more. Assign each group to role-play a first session with the family of an adolescent. Each role-play shall consist of one therapist and at
least one adolescent and one parent. The teen can be similar to the client in the video or you can develop other scenarios. (You can have group members switch roles if time permits.) After the role-plays, have the groups come together to discuss their experiences. First have the clients share their experiences, and then have the therapists talk about their experiences in the session. Finally, open up a general discussion on what participants learned about adolescent family therapy.

An alternative is to do this role-play in front of the whole group with one therapist and one family; the entire group can observe, acting as the advising team to the therapist. Before the end of the session, have the therapist take a break, get feedback from the observation team, and bring it back into the session with the family. Other observers might jump in if the therapist gets stuck. Follow up with a discussion that explores what does and does not work in therapy with teens and their families.

7. WATCH THE SERIES

This video is one in a series portraying effective approaches to therapy with children of different ages. Each video in the series presents a master therapist working with real clients, just as you see here. By showing several of the videos in the series, you can expose viewers to a variety of approaches, allowing them an opportunity to see what fits best for their own style and orientation.

*Key Aspects of the Adolescent Therapy Model*: Psychotherapy with adolescents is candid and honest, without getting caught up in the power struggles that define so many of teens’ relationships with adults. Adolescents need adults to help them navigate the path toward adulthood, but adults are often provoked by teens’ defiant or combative style. Therapy with this population demands that the therapist be authentic, letting go of the wish to win the approval of the teen. Such approval may come, but not as it does with adults, and it may go up and down along the way. Sometimes the therapist’s role is to help adolescents express themselves in ways that parents can hear, while at others the therapy is more about empowering parents to set limits and follow through, so that they can maintain their position in
the family and strengthen their relationship with the teen.

*Child Therapy Models:* Other videos in the series use different therapeutic models. We can reflect upon the differences among these models by exploring the following questions:

- How does the model explain the therapeutic process?
- What assumptions does the model imply about the purpose of therapy with children and teens?
- How is theory translated into practice in real-life situations?
- What is the role of the therapist?
- What outcomes are associated with successful therapy?
- How does the therapist work with other family members besides the child?
- What kinds of research support the approach?

8. PERSPECTIVE ON VIDEOS AND THE PERSONALITY OF THE THERAPIST

Psychotherapy portrayed in videos is less off-the-cuff than therapy in practice. Therapists or clients in videos may be nervous, putting their best foot forward, or trying to show mistakes and how to deal with them. Therapists may also move more quickly than is typical in everyday practice to demonstrate a technique. The personal style of a therapist is often as important as their techniques and theories. Thus, while we can certainly pick up ideas from master therapists, participants must make the best use of relevant theory, technique, and research that fits their own personal style and the needs of their clients.

*A NOTE ON PRIVACY AND CONFIDENTIALITY*

Because this video contains an actual therapy session, please take care to protect the privacy and confidentiality of the clients who have courageously shared their personal lives with us.
Group Discussion Questions

Professors, training directors and facilitators may use a few or all of these discussion questions keyed to certain elements of the video or those issues most relevant to the viewers.

INTRODUCTION

1. **Basic Assumptions:** Edgette lays out a series of basic assumptions about adolescent family therapy, including: the therapist cannot control the adolescent’s behavior, teenagers are not going to be won over by the therapist’s logic, and it’s a waste of time to try to get an adolescent to talk. What do you think of Edgette’s basic assumptions? Do they make sense to you? How do you think working from these basic assumptions might impact your work as a therapist with adolescents and their families? What would you change or add to her list?

2. **Giving Feedback:** How do you react to Edgette’s approach of giving the family candid feedback during the session about their communication style? How do you think this helps families? What might be challenging for you as the therapist about giving this kind of feedback to a family with an acting-out teen?

3. **Direct Intervention:** What do you think about Edgette’s approach of working to engender in the adolescent a desire to collaborate with the therapy rather than making direct requests of the teen to alter certain behaviors? How do you suppose this can actually be accomplished?

4. **Your Strengths:** Now that you’ve heard the details of Edgette’s approach, what strengths do you see yourself bringing to adolescent family therapy? What is it about you that would make you most effective with this population? What do you think would be most difficult for you? Does this kind of work appeal to you? Why or why not?
PSYCHOTHERAPY SESSION

5. **Tenor of the Family**: How would you describe Edgette’s technique of gauging the tenor of the family? How does she get a sense of who they are and how they relate? What about her approach in this step stands out for you?

6. **Marshalling Reserves**: How does Edgette empower Mom to marshal her reserves in the face of Heather’s provocations? Are her interventions effective? Do you see empowering the mother as an appropriate therapeutic goal for this family? Why or why not? What might you have done differently?

7. **Sassy to Soft**: Edgette talked about giving adolescents the opportunity to save face so they can change by their own choice without appearing as if they are doing it because they were told to. How do you see that dynamic playing out in this session? What does Edgette do to facilitate Heather’s dignified change from sassy and combative to soft and open? What did you notice, if anything, about Edgette’s and the clients’ body language throughout the session? What messages came across to you?

8. **Balance of Power**: What do you think of Edgette’s assessment that the issue for this family was that the daughter had too much power and the mother not enough? Did you see any shifts in the balance of power as a result of this session? What else do you think might have been going on here? What did Edgette miss?

DISCUSSION

9. **The Therapeutic Relationship**: How would you characterise the therapeutic relationship in this video? Did Edgette form a working alliance with the family? How significant do you think the therapeutic relationship was in this particular course of therapy?

10. **The Model**: hat do you think about using this model with adolescent clients and their families? Does it make sense to you? Do you see yourself using it in your work with this population? What in particular would you do differently from Edgette’s model?
11. **Edgette’s Style:** What was it about Edgette that allowed Heather and her mother to feel comfortable enough to engage in the therapy? How did Edgette join with them?

12. **Personal Reaction:** How would you feel about being Edgette’s client? Do you feel an alliance could be made and that she would be effective with you? How so?

13. **Personal Reaction:** How would you feel about being Oaklander’s client? Do you feel an alliance could be made and that she would be effective with you? Why or why not?
Reaction Paper for Classrooms and Training

- **Assignment:** Complete this reaction paper and return it by the date noted by the facilitator.

- **Suggestions for Viewers:** Take notes on these questions while viewing the video and complete the reaction paper afterwards, or use the questions as a way to approach discussion. Respond to each question below.

- **Length and Style:** 2-4 pages double-spaced. Be brief and concise. Do NOT provide a full synopsis of the video. This is meant to be a brief reaction paper that you write soon after watching the video—we want your ideas and reactions.

**What to Write:** Respond to the following questions in your reaction paper:

1. **Key points:** What important points did you learn about psychodrama? What stands out in how Edgette works?

2. **What I am resistant to:** What issues/principles/strategies did you find yourself having resistance to, or what approaches made you feel uncomfortable? Did any ideas, techniques or interactions push your buttons? What interventions would you be least likely to apply in your work? Explore these questions.

3. **What I found most helpful:** What was most beneficial to you as a therapist about the model presented? What tools or perspectives did you find helpful and might you use in your own work?

4. **How I would do it differently:** What might you have done differently than the therapist in the video? Be specific in what different approaches, strategies and techniques you might have applied.

5. **Other Questions/Reactions:** What questions or reactions did you have as you viewed the interview? Other comments, thoughts or feelings?
Suggestions for Further Readings, Websites and Videos

BOOKS


WEB RESOURCES
Janet Sasson Edgette’s Website
www.janetedgette.com

Edgette and Associates/ The Milton H. Erickson Institute of Philadelphia
www.edgettetherapy.com

The Milton H. Erickson Foundation
www.erickson-foundation.org

An Interview with Monica McGoldrick
www.psychotherapy.net/interview/
Monica_McGoldrick Psychotherapy
RELATED VIDEOS AVAILABLE AT WWW.PSYCHOTHERAPY.NET

Adlerian Parent Consultation
—Jon Carlson, PsyD, EdD

Exploring Narradrama
—Pamela Dunne, PhD

Family Secrets: Implications for Theory and Therapy
—Evan Imber-Black, PhD

Making Divorce Work: A Clinical Approach to the Binuclear Family
—Constance Ahrons, PhD

The Legacy of Unresolved Loss: A Family Systems Approach
—Monica McGoldrick, LCSW, PhD

Narrative Therapy with Children
—Stephen Madigan, MSW, PhD

Psychotherapy with Gay, Lesbian and Bisexual Clients, Program 7: Sexual Minority Adolescents
—Ron Scott, PhD & Christine Padesky, PhD

Reality Therapy with Children
—Robert E. Wubbolding, EdD

Solution-Focused Child Therapy
—John J. Murphy, PhD

Tools and Techniques for Family Therapy
—John Edwards, PhD

Solution-Focused Child Therapy
—John J. Murphy, PhD

Tools and Techniques for Family Therapy
—John Edwards, PhD
Complete Transcript of a Demonstration of Adolescent Family Therapy with Janet Sasson Edgette, PsyD

Note to facilitators: We have marked indicators at five-minute intervals throughout the transcript, which coordinate with chapter markers on the DVD so that you may easily skip to desired points within the session.

PSYCHOTHERAPY SESSION

2–1

Janette Sasson Edgette: All right. Claudia, Heather. Why don’t you tell me something about what you wanted to try and accomplish tonight and how I might be of help.

Heather: We have lots of power struggles all the time over like who does the dishes or, you know, just little stupid stuff. And I’d kind of like that to be eliminated, I guess you’d say.

Edgette: The fights over dishes. That’s it?

Heather: No, not just dishes. I mean stupid stuff.

Edgette: What other stupid stuff?

Heather: Getting me to vacuum.

Claudia: My view?

Edgette: Getting you to vacuum.

Claudia: My view?

Edgette: Everybody’s.

Claudia: Heather spends more time trying to talk her way out of doing something rather than just cooperate right off the bat and do
her responsibility. And by the time she gets done arguing with me about why she can’t do the dishes or why she can’t do the dishes now or why does she, can’t she do this first, it’s just...It’s a power thing.

2–2
You know, so she spends a half-hour trying to get out of doing the dishes when it would take about 10 minutes to do them. A lot of manipulation going on.

**Edgette:** Like what?

**Heather:** I have no idea. I have been trying to figure out what exactly she means by that for years.

**Claudia:** Power. A power thing. Bargaining. Always bargaining.

**Edgette:** Do you bargain back?

**Heather:** Yeah.

**Claudia:** She breaks me down, yeah.

**Edgette:** Does she break you down because...

**Claudia:** And she knows that she breaks me down, and that’s a big one.

**Edgette:** Why? Because it goes on and on?

**Claudia:** Yes.

**Edgette:** Or is she very good verbally...

**Claudia:** Very, very persistent. Yes.

**Edgette:** And gets you involved.

**Claudia:** She pushes my buttons.

**Edgette:** And she pushes your buttons.

**Claudia:** Yes. And she knows, she knows that if she keeps up, I will eventually throw my hands in the air and say, “Whatever. Just get out of here.” So. And it’s very aggravating because I feel like I’ve failed, you know, in doing what I was supposed to be doing. Whatever goal I was trying to achieve.
2-3
I feel very trampled by the time she gets, we get done.

Heather: I feel the same way, like when you’re yelling at me or whatever.

Edgette: Okay. Who else is in the family?

Claudia: Five-year-old Bruce and stepdad.

Edgette: Okay. He couldn’t join us tonight?

Claudia: He’s taking a math final right now. I’m sure he’d rather be here.

Edgette: Very good. All right. Tell me some more about where you guys don’t get along and where you have problems. Dishes are one thing and chores. What else? What else doesn’t work?

Heather: Just everyday struggles, and me getting along with my brother.

Edgette: The 5 year old that’s out there?

Heather: Yeah.

Edgette: What do you guys fight about?

Heather: We don’t really fight. We just kind of ignore each other, and we just don’t get along.

Claudia: And you yell at him.

Heather: He yells at me.

Edgette: What do you yell at each other for?

Heather: Stupid stuff.

Claudia: They fight over the TV.

2-4
Heather: Sibling rivalry.

Claudia: Yeah.

Edgette: Over the TV?
Heather: Yeah.

Edgette: Over who gets it or who’s watching what or whatever? Stuff like that?

Heather: Yeah.

Edgette: All right. What else? Tell me—Flush the picture out for me. What’s, what happens at home when you guys argue? And does it go into school? Does it go into, you know, the evening routine? Is it every day or is it once a week or all day?

Claudia: She hates her family.

Edgette: She hates her family.

Claudia: Of course. You know, it’s a teenage thing.

Edgette: Which? This family?

Claudia: Yeah. I’m not fair.

Edgette: How long have you been remarried?

Heather: Six years.

Claudia: Six years.

Edgette: Okay.

Claudia: He’s been her primary father figure since she was 3. And then she’s been his stepfather since she was 9.

Heather: I’ve always called him Dad, though.

Claudia: She’s always called, yeah. Since we dated for a year or two, we started getting serious and she just kind of naturally started calling him Dad, so.

2-5

She’s doing a lot of things that I’m, I’m just scared to death that she’s going to go down the wrong path.

Edgette: Like what?

Claudia: She just, she doesn’t take “no” for an answer. I try to....

Edgette: From anybody?
Claudia: I don’t know.

Heather: Mostly from you.

Claudia: Mostly from me. As an example, she is allowed three phone calls a day because we’re on a call pack. She can talk as long as she wants. I don’t care, but please—Because we pay by the phone call, not by the minute. You know, keep it down to three and our bill will be okay.

2-6

So she makes…. I saw the phone bill and it was 20-something …

Heather: Twenty-six.

Claudia: … 26 phone calls in a day.

Edgette: A day?

Claudia: In a day.

Edgette: In a day.

Heather: In the one day that I was babysitting because when I was, that was like over—

Claudia: This is the manipulation part.

Heather: That was like a year ago, and the only reason I did that, Mom, is because you kept telling me when I was babysitting for Erin that I could use unlimited phone and it was all right.

Claudia: I didn’t say that.

Heather: Yes, you did, Mom. I remember you saying that.

Claudia: Okay.

Heather: I could have unlimited phone and unlimited use of the fridge.

Claudia: Okay.

Edgette: So what happened as a result of the 26 phone calls.

Claudia: Well, that was just the—I think that was the highest, but it went anywhere from 13, 14, 15 up to 28 phone calls. I mean, it was like
a week span where she just made over 100 phone calls.

**Edgette:** So what happened?

**Claudia:** I grounded her from the phone. I took away the privilege.

**Heather:** I’ve been grounded for like a year now.

**Claudia:** Yeah. Because she just can’t get it right. So then we get the next phone bill and it turns out that when we were going to sleep at night, she was getting up at midnight and making phone calls until 5:00 in the morning. Because....

2-7

**Edgette:** Who were you calling?

**Claudia:** Friends of mine.

**Edgette:** They’re up at 3:00 and 4:00?

**Claudia:** I don’t know why they’re parents are letting them answer the phone at 3:00 and 4:00 in the morning.

**Heather:** They have their own phones, Mom.

**Claudia:** Oh. Okay.

**Edgette:** Do you know who the friends are?

**Claudia:** They don’t come over. She says that they don’t like me, so they don’t come over. I have, I have, I know of a few of them.

**Edgette:** But she goes out with people that you don’t know?

**Claudia:** Correct. Which I don’t like.

**Edgette:** Sure. I imagine not.

**Claudia:** So we busted her on that. That went on for about two weeks before she got caught.

**Edgette:** Okay.

**Claudia:** And so then she got grounded, so then she started sneaking out at night because she wouldn’t take.... She would not accept the rules.

**Heather:** I snuck out three times, Mom.
2-8

Claudia: She snuck out three times. When I found out, I got up and I was down working in my office at about 6:30 in the morning and she came crawling in my window, so she had been out all night.

Edgette: Where’d you go?

Heather: I went over to my friend’s house, Jonna.

Claudia: She wasn’t allowed to spend the night at Jonna’s house, but she wouldn’t accept the rule so she snuck out and did it. Because some bad things happened last time she—

Edgette: Went to Jonna’s.

Claudia: —went to Jonna’s, spent the night at Jonna’s.

Edgette: What happened?

Claudia: They ended up spending the night at a guy’s house.

Heather: It’s not just any guy. I’ve been friends with him since third grade and he’s just a friend.

Claudia: But I’ve never met him and I don’t know that. And you know by your past actions, I can’t trust you. So don’t make it sound like I’m being a terrible person.

Heather: But I told you that so many times, Mom. You still….

Claudia: You tell me everything, Heather.

Heather: But you still make it sound like he’s just some guy that I just met, and I went and spent the night with him.

Claudia: No, what did I say? I said, “They went and spent the night at a guy’s house.”

2-9

Heather: Well, can’t you use his name instead of just calling him a guy.

Claudia: I don’t know his name. I’ve never met the guy. You never told me. You never brought him over. I don’t know. You spent the night at some guy’s house.
Heather: It’s not just some guy, Mom.

Claudia: Tell me his name.

Heather: Colin, and you’ve known that.

Claudia: You spent—I’ve never met Colin.

Heather: But I’ve told you his name many times.

Claudia: Okay. You spent the night at Colin’s house.

Edgette: What happened when she came back from Colin’s, from Colin’s house?

Claudia: I freaked out. Her mother, Jonna’s mother, ended up coming over, knocking on my door saying, “The kids have been gone all night. I don’t know where they are.”

Edgette: She didn’t know until that morning? Jonna’s mom didn’t know until that morning that her daughter….

Claudia: Correct. Correct.

Edgette: Okay.

Heather: And she called the police.

Claudia: I freaked out. You know, all kinds of…. You can’t imagine what was going through my head.

Edgette: And your husband, his name is?

Claudia: Dick.

Edgette: Dick, okay. Was he awake with you and…

Claudia: He was at work.

Edgette: He was at work. Okay.

Claudia: Yeah, he gets up. He goes to work at 5:45.

Edgette: Okay. You called him.

Claudia: I called him.

2-10

He started panicking. I hung up the phone. They did a quick town
search, you know. Some friends of ours kind of went to where they thought they might be.

Heather: And they went to Moments, too.

Claudia: They went to Moments, which is, that’s where she was. She was in a whole other town with Collin.

Heather: Mom, it’s six miles away.

Claudia: You’re right.

Edgette: So they found her. Brought her home.

Claudia: I called the police. They came over.

Heather: They…. The police had seen me and Jonna walking down the road but they said that they, we seemed like we knew exactly where we were going, so they weren’t going to stop us. So they didn’t stop us then.

Edgette: What about other things? What else has happened? School all right or not so good?

Heather: Not so good.

Edgette: Not so good. What? How not so good?

Heather: Very not so good.

Edgette: For a long time or just recently?

Heather: Since fifth grade.

Edgette: Oh, that’s very not so good.

Heather: Yeah.

Edgette: What grade are you in now?

Heather: Ninth.

2-11

Edgette: What doesn’t get accomplished there?

Heather: Homework.

Edgette: Because?
Heather: I don’t have the motivation to do it, and I just usually don’t get on to it.

Edgette: What do you do instead?

Heather: Doodle.

Edgette: That’s it? For all those hours after school?

Heather: No. Then I sit in front of the TV and watch TV till…

Claudia: Yeah, she comes home and tells me that her homework’s done, or she didn’t have any.

Heather: You stopped asking me, Mom, so I just stopped telling you.

Edgette: Are you home when she gets home from school?

Claudia: Yes. I’m a stay at home mom.

Edgette: Okay. So what type of arrangement do you have in terms of monitoring her homework?

Claudia: I stopped doing it in high school.

Edgette: Stopped monitoring it?

Claudia: Right.

Edgette: Because?

Claudia: I, I threw my hands up. We went through the… In fifth grade, I bought her an assignment notebook because she was, “I forgot,” “I forgot this paper at home,” “I didn’t have it written down,” blah, blah, blah, blah.

They weren’t actually supposed to get an assignment notebook, I think, until middle school. Middle school?

Heather: Which was sixth grade.

Claudia: So I… But I bought her an assignment notebook in the fifth grade. I, you know, every day I’d check it and then it was, “Oh, well, we didn’t have any homework.” Yeah, they did, so then I started having the teacher sign it saying that yes or no she didn’t have any
homework, and then she forgot the assignment notebook, and she lost the assignment notebook, and she forgot to fill it out. And after four years, I gave up.

Edgette: So it never got better in that four year period? Nothing helped? Was Dick involved? Did he help? Try?

Claudia: Yeah. He tries. We try. We try to, you know, team up, figure out what to do next.

Edgette: Okay. How do you do in school?

Heather: In school? Like besides the homework thing?

Edgette: Uh-huh.

Heather: I’m really good at school.

Edgette: You’re really good at school. What grades do you get?

2-13

Heather: Well, homework’s a lot of the grade, so I don’t get that good grades, but on tests I get high scores. And like projects and art, I get high scores on those, too.

Edgette: Projects you do in school?

Heather: Some are.

Edgette: But not, but not projects you do at home?

Claudia: Yeah, she doesn’t do any projects at home.

Edgette: I didn’t think there were any projects getting done at home. So what are your grades in school?

Heather: Well, I’m getting a B in biology, and that’s my hardest class and that’s my highest grade.

Edgette: How did you manage that?

Heather: Well, we didn’t have a teacher for three weeks or four weeks or something like that.

Edgette: You had a sub?

Heather: Yeah, because our teacher has Hepatitis C. He just came
back today.

**Edgette:** Okay. Did you have homework? You didn’t have homework?

**Heather:** No.

**Edgette:** Okay. Does school matter to you? Or it doesn’t matter?

**Heather:** Not really.

**Edgette:** Doesn’t matter? Did it ever matter?

**Heather:** Like in second grade.

**2-14**

**Claudia:** She has very high standardized test scores. Extremely high. She gets A’s on tests. She does very good. She’s very intelligent. She gets really, she does really well in school when she …

**Edgette:** When she wants to.

**Claudia:** … wants to.

**Edgette:** When is it one of the times when she wants to do well?

**Heather:** Well, art’s one of the classes that I really…

**Claudia:** Art. Yeah. And that collage that you did for Mrs. Hydeman. Or the medieval—

**Heather:** Both of them.

**Claudia:** —odyssey.

**Heather:** That was Mrs. Hydeman. That was English.

**Claudia:** She did very well in that. That was, that was homework that she brought home and she asked for my help. That’s a big thing, too, because I’m a teacher. I’m a registered teacher, so I tell her, you know, she says, “Oh, it’s too hard.” I say, “Well, bring it home and ask me.”

**Edgette:** Sure.

**Claudia:** “No!” Because we’re going to get in a fight about it. Because, you know, I don’t…

**Heather:** I don’t like the way she tells how to do, like, the problems in math or whatever, and it just kind of gets on my nerves.
And then she doesn’t like the way I…

**Claudia:** I don’t like her attitude, the way she disrespects me when I’m trying to teach her something.

**Edgette:** So the whole thing just dissolves?

**Heather:** Yeah. It’s kind of pointless.

**Edgette:** Well, that’s too bad. What do you guys not fight about?

**Heather:** The music we listen to. Some of it, anyway.

**Claudia:** Yeah, we both, we both like the same…

**Edgette:** Okay. What else? Where do you guys get along?

**Heather:** Well, we both seem to agree a lot on me going to my dad’s quite often.

**Edgette:** Where’s your dad?

**Heather:** Where does he live?

**Edgette:** Well, I mean, is he local? Is he in the area?

**Heather:** At the moment. He broke his leg on...He builds tanks for a living, water tanks, and then he, a piece of equipment fell and he was at the top of a 50-foot tank and fell and broke his ankle. And then, on the other one, a piece of bone sliced off and it’s orbiting around his foot, so he’s off the job for awhile.

2-16

**Edgette:** I imagine he is.

**Heather:** So right now he’s staying in Lackport, but otherwise, he travels the country.

**Edgette:** Oh, okay. Is that like near where you are? Like—

**Claudia:** It’s a short drive.

**Heather:** It’s about 45 minutes away.

**Edgette:** Oh, okay. So when you go to your dad’s, you can get there, you can go for the day or for the weekend.
Heather: Yeah, I have to go for the weekends.
Edgette: Okay. How much time do you spend with him?
Heather: The whole weekend.
Edgette: Whole weekend. Every other weekend? Or…
Heather: Yeah.
Claudia: Okay.
Heather: Whenever I go see him, I spend the whole weekend with him.
Claudia: He’s with you. Okay.
Edgette: Is that like every other weekend? You have a lot of contact with him or just a little bit?
Heather: It depends. If he’s in town, I have lots of contact with him. Like, not this weekend but next weekend, I want to go see him again. And I just got back from last, from like last Wednesday to last Sunday.
Edgette: Okay. And how do you and your dad get along?
Heather: We get along great.
Edgette: You get along great. Tell me what you guys do fight about.
Heather: Well, my Christmas list. That was about it.

2-17

Edgette: That’s as bad as it gets? What about homework?
Heather: He says that he knows I can do a lot better, but he knows I’ll probably improve in future. And he kind of, for awhile he was giving me…
Edgette: What makes him think you’ll improve in the future?
Heather: Denial. I don’t know.
Edgette: So what happened—Do you go home to his house when you have schoolwork?
Heather: No.

Edgette: So the issues that come up at home, in your home, they don’t crop up?

Heather: Well, actually, last time I did go out there, I brought my art sketchbook and I had some art sketches to do for week of the (…).

Edgette: But you like doing that. That’s not hard.

Heather: Yeah.

Edgette: Does your dad—Do you talk with him about the problems with the homework and the behavior at home and attitude, things like that.

Claudia: Not really. He doesn’t contact us much when he’s out of town.

Edgette: Okay.

Claudia: Um…No.

2-18

Edgette: Would he be a—

Claudia: She would just get, she would get all upset with me if I did that.

Edgette: So?

Claudia: Yeah. Exactly. One more thing to give me grief about.

Edgette: What would happen if you were to talk to her dad and say, “Listen, we’ve got a problem here. I know you know about it, but we need to strategize…”

Claudia: I’ve tried to talk to him before about it and he’s …

Heather: Thickheaded and arrogant.

Claudia: “Oh, put her on the phone. I’m going to change everything,” you know. Then she gets on the phone, and he yells at her. Then they get in a fight.

Edgette: Ah, so you do have a fight other than that Christmas list.
Claudia: And then that’s pretty much it.

Heather: Last time we did that was like…

Claudia: Then she hangs up the phone and says, “Thanks a lot, Mom.” And that’s pretty much the end of his involvement, you know.

Edgette: Is he as worried about this as you are?

Claudia: I don’t know.

Heather: No.

Claudia: I don’t think, from what she says, I don’t think so.

Edgette: Why wouldn’t he be?

Heather: I don’t know.

Edgette: What about the going out at night and making all these phone calls and stuff like that.

2-19

Claudia: He doesn’t know about that.

Edgette: How come?

Claudia: Her biological father?

Edgette: Uh-huh.

Claudia: What good would it do to tell him?

Heather: He knows about the phone calls.

Edgette: He should know. He’s her dad. He should know. He might be able to help.

Claudia: I just, I feel like I’m spinning my wheels by telling him anything.

Edgette: You might be. You might, but he probably should know so that he stays, so that he has, first of all, a fuller picture of what’s going on with his daughter, so that he has some opportunity to try and influence her, and so that he, so you don’t end up taking all the hits for being the one who’s trying to help her curtail some of this stuff and get back on track. Otherwise, you know, he’s sort of the innocent,
naive person who thinks everything’s fine, and so she goes there for a weekend and there’s no problems and you know what’s going on, and she comes home and you deal with problems. And…well, you do it alone.

Heather: That’s not necessarily true, because my grandma knows. Because I’ve talked to my grandma before.

2-20

Edgette: Is that your mom’s mom or your dad’s?
Claudia: Her mom.
Heather: My dad’s mom.
Edgette: Your dad’s mom.
Heather: I talk to her about like what’s been going on and, you know, what I’ve gotten in trouble for lately, and I’m sure she’s told my dad because the entire family knows now. So it’s not just my dad that finds out. So I’m sure he has an idea that I’m not his perfect little angel, but…

Edgette: But he doesn’t talk with you about it. How about your stepdad? Do they have much, does he have much to do in helping?
Claudia: Yes.
Heather: I get along great with him.
Edgette: Okay.
Claudia: He’s very, he’s, he can do more than I can. He’s very strict. I mean, he’s not very strict, but he’s… Whereas I’ll throw my hands up and say, “Whatever. You know, I’m going to have a nervous breakdown; just get away from me.” He’ll keep his nose in there and force her to show, you know, make her be responsible for her actions.
Edgette: Okay. How does he do that?
Claudia: He’s very good at that.
Heather: Like she was just going…
Claudia: He doesn’t back it out. He doesn’t back down. He’s more, he’s more…
2-21

Edgette: He just stays firm. He says, “This is the way you need to do this,” or, “You can’t do that.”

Claudia: Right. Right. I mean he’s more stubborn than she is when it comes to arguing, and he, and he sticks to the point. Whereas she will get me off the point. You know, it’s where the manipulation comes in. She’ll bargain, and she’ll, “Well, what about this?” And she’ll bring up some sort of point to try to get me off course.

Heather: Not consciously, though.

Claudia: Oh, yeah. Subconsciously.

Heather: It just kind of happens. I don’t like sit there and think of things like, “Oh, what can I do to get her off the subject?” It’s not like that.

Edgette: Have you guys worked with other therapists?

Heather: Yeah.

Claudia: We, I took her to a therapist who turned out to be a loony bin, so we didn’t go back.

Edgette: That was a good decision.

Heather: I thought she was…

Claudia: She was nuts.

Heather: No, she wasn’t.

Claudia: Okay.

Heather: She thought that the kids should run the family, and the adults should listen to the kids.

Claudia: Yeah, that was pretty much it.

Edgette: So you were gone, huh?

Claudia: I work on, I work on the ten commandments, you know. Like respect your parents, and this woman is telling Heather that she’s the queen of the universe. It’s like…

Heather: That was it.

Claudia: That was it.

Edgette: That was it.

Claudia: I’m speaking, I go and talk to one of the counselors here. I’m a student here. So I go and I talk to her once a week or every other week, and she’s kind of helping me deal with, just dealing with myself.

Edgette: Okay. What has she been able to do that helps you stand firm with Heather or be able to set parameters that she will listen to? Or…

Claudia: We kind of work on me, that even if… No matter what happens, it doesn’t mean that I’m a bad parent.

Edgette: Okay, so it’s preserving your sense as you sort of go through this difficult period.

Claudia: Right. So it’s, because, you know, I’ve, you…

You tend to think that you’re a terrible parent. You know, you’re such a failure and all this other stuff, so she’s helping me to see that I’m not, that it’s just not working out, so I’ve got to try something else.

Edgette: Okay. Well, we can help you try something else. Tell me more about you and your stepdad. How come you guys don’t argue?

Heather: We used to, we used to get at each other’s throats constantly. Like every time he’d enter the room he would either find something wrong with me or I’d find something wrong with him and we’d just start yelling at each other. We just never got along for like the longest time.

Edgette: So what changed?

Heather: I don’t know.

Edgette: How long ago was it? That it changed.

Heather: Like six months ago. Would you say?
Claudia: Yeah.

Heather: I guess…I don’t know.

Claudia: We—Excuse me. I’m sorry.

2-24

When she sneaked out and we found out that she was sneaking out, we totally overhauled the discipline system. Instead of being punished for the things that she did wrong, we decided to take the approach that she would gain privileges. Kind of the tough love thing. So if she came, if she didn’t get any… And it’s a huge thing when she doesn’t get any detentions at school.

Heather: Like once every six weeks.

Edgette: That you don’t get detentions.

Heather: Yeah.

Claudia: She would come in from school. “Did you get any detentions?”

“No.”

“Did you get in trouble?”

“No.”

“Is there anything that you might not think is important that happened at school but we might think is—”

You know, you have to be very specific.

“No.”

“Okay. Today, you need to vacuum and do the dishes.” She did that. She did that. “Okay. You have achieved all of your objectives. You may go out for an hour and a half. You can go out from 7:00 at night to 8:30. You’re in this house at 8:30.”

2-25

Heather: 7:00 to 8:15.

Claudia: 7:00 to 8:15.
Edgette: Is that working?

Claudia: It worked. And she did good. She worked up, now she’s up to an hour …

Heather: And 15 minutes.

Claudia: On Saturday and Sunday? Or Friday and Saturday?

Heather: Friday and Saturday it’s 6:30 to 9:00.

Claudia: 6:30 to 9:00. She’s gotten from 7:00 to 8:15 now on Saturday and Sunday—She could…Dick gave her the option of adding a little bit of time each day or sticking with the hour and 15 minutes Monday through Thursday, or Sunday through Thursday, and then on weekends she could have a big blowout of time. And as long as she stays responsible and keeps up, she will continue to add privileges. But like when she has a detention at school, she’s grounded that day at home. You know. We try to make it correlate.

2-26

Edgette: Which is…Sure.

Heather: I’ve pretty much been suggesting that they make me earn back privileges for, like, two years. And they finally listened to me.

Claudia: Well, you are just the goddess of all of our problem solving. Thank you.

Edgette: What do you want to get out of this? What would you want to change in your family? How do you want things to be different?

Heather: I don’t know. I’d just like to get along with my family better, especially my stepsister. Which, by the way, I called Debbie yesterday, and we’re getting along.

Edgette: Where is she?

Heather: In a town like 20 minutes away from us.

Edgette: How old is she?

Heather: She’s 21. She’s my stepsister-in-law. She’s my stepbrother’s fiancée.
Edgette: Okay. And you guys get along now?
Heather: Yeah.
Edgette: Out of that phone call.
Heather: Yeah. Because like my other cousin just had a baby.
Claudia: …Had a baby.
Edgette: Okay.
Heather: But when she lived with us after she just had my niece, we hated each other.

2-27
And then we started getting along, then she moved out. Then she moved back in and we hate each other again. We had one huge fight and I just sort of screamed that I hated her and I hope she dies and I hate her and I hate her and I hate her. And I just started screaming, and we both started crying, and…Well, things haven’t been good since then.
Edgette: No, I imagine not. But the phone call, you guys patched it up, and…
Heather: Well, we’ve been… I haven’t…That was like, our big fight was like eight months ago or so. And then we didn’t talk to each other for like a month and a half, then we just kind of, we would see each other but we wouldn’t say anything. And then we just kind of started from there and gradually progressed until I finally called her yesterday and we talked for like 20 minutes.

Edgette: What do you enjoy doing? Outside of, you know, being at home. What do you with your friends? Do you have hobbies? Interests?
Heather: I like spending money.
Edgette: You like spending money.
Heather: Large amounts of money.
Edgette: Where do you get money from?
Heather: Mostly my dad.

Edgette: Why does he give you money?

2-28

Heather: Because…Well, like he just gave me $100 to go buy a homecoming dress, and I went and spent it. And then he gave me some money to go to the movies and then go Christmas shopping.

Edgette: What else do you enjoy doing?

Heather: Wandering stores.

Edgette: Pardon?

Heather: Wandering stores.

Edgette: Wandering stores. Why do you like wandering?

Heather: I have nothing better to do.

Edgette: Really?

Heather: Yeah.

Edgette: Of all the stuff there is to do, you have nothing better you find to do?

Heather: There’s nothing really to do in a small farm town that has 1000 people, maybe less.

Edgette: I’ve never lived in a small farm town, but…

Claudia: I keep myself awfully busy.

Edgette: But other than the art and the doodling, I haven’t heard anything else that really calls to you, that you really enjoy. I’m just trying to get a sense of where you want to go with your life or where you see things going in the next couple of years. You’re not into school.

2-29

Heather: No.

Edgette: But you’re bright.

Heather: A couple of classes I like. Like biology I really like. We just
started studying genetics. And computer applications is okay because we get to surf the web. And PE’s cool. I like PE. I don’t like the teacher, but I like PE.

Edgette: You get involved with drugs, alcohol?

Heather: I did drugs twice, but I’ve only drank three times. One was eighth grade graduation, and I never got—I’ve never actually gotten drunk before in my life. The first time I drank, it was an accident. I was at a wedding and I was 12 and I put down my kiddy cocktail and picked up a bloody mary that was right next to it, and I thought it was my kiddy cocktail.

Edgette: Kiddy cocktail?

Heather: It’s like Sprite and cherry juice.

Edgette: And it looked like tomato juice?

2-30

Heather: Yeah.

Edgette: Okay.

Heather: It wasn’t, though.

Edgette: It wasn’t the same?

Heather: No.

Edgette: You weren’t after you had that, either, I’m sure.

What do you worry about most for your daughter here? I mean, there’s two things here I’m thinking and within the time that we have what we could focus on. One is the relationship that you two have where she kind of verbally bullies you into saying, “That’s it. I can’t—Whatever. Do whatever.” And yet she’s responding to your husband, her stepdad’s rules and disciplines and seems to be responding well to the program you have set up. You know, not all the time. On and off [inaudible] a problem. That’s one.

The other thing I’m wondering about is where she’s going to go from here, and I’m wondering what thoughts you have about where she
could go.

Claudia: She has… The sky is her limit, literally.

Edgette: Well, if she kind of pulls it together and focuses more on school.

Claudia: Yes. I mean, she has a wonderful heart. She’s a wonderful person.

Edgette: How does that come out?

2-31

Heather: Well, it wasn’t exactly the best thing having the best heart in the world when I went to see my dad, because my uncle has a snake. And then I just got my dress and then I was all upset and I wanted to take the dress back, and I just wanted to go home because my dad went and bought a mouse.

Claudia: To feed the snake.

Heather: Yeah. And I cried for like two hours and made him take the mouse back. And I threatened to let it go if he fed it to the—

Edgette: Good for you.

Heather: I cried so bad.

Claudia: But she was, I mean, she’s a good person. She is.

Edgette: Well, why you were saying it wasn’t a good thing? You were saying it wasn’t such a good thing to have a heart—

Heather: Not in that case.

Claudia: She was just bringing up his plan that backfired.

Heather: That was like—

Edgette: Well, it is a backfire only because—

Claudia: She probably got in trouble with her uncle who had the snake.

Edgette: Oh, okay. Had the snake.

Heather: That snake can—
Edgette: Yeah. I got in trouble once because I released three frogs that these people had collected for fishing.

Heather: I would have, too.

Edgette: And they were—And I took them out, and I let them go, and I felt terrible. But I—

Heather: I told Mr. Kalo, our biology teacher, I said, “If we have anything, if we have to dissect anything, you’re out of luck. I’m not touching anything with anything that sharp.”

2-32

Edgette: So she has a kind heart in that way.

Claudia: She has a good heart. She’s a vacation bible school teacher up until a couple years ago. She decided—

Heather: Just last year.

Claudia: She’s an excellent reader, but I think reading is no longer cool in her group of people.

Heather: I just don’t like it. It’s, it’s aggravating.

Edgette: It’s aggravating? Reading?

Claudia: She would read a book a week. She used to. Very good, very good, above level reader. In the past couple of years, her goals and her enthusiasm for being a good person pretty much went down the sewer. And I’m afraid that it’s going to continue to go down the sewer, and I’m afraid that...You know, you can’t tell a teenager when they’re 14 years old that you’re going down, you’re going the wrong way. Down—

2-33

And I tell her and she tells, she kind of rolls her eyes at me, but you know, you’re...the person that you’re going to be when you grow up, you’re making that person now. And it’s, it’s very hard to watch.

Edgette: Well, you know, it’s almost as if Heather’s making choices in spite of her true nature.

Claudia: She is. Yes.
Edgette: You know, you’re, you seem to me a better kid than the things that you do.

Claudia: Thank you.

Edgette: And a kinder kid. The mouse story you might have thought was just sort of incidental, but I’m very touched by that, and it tells me something about your intolerance of cruelty and sadism and cruel kinds of things.

Heather: Well, she’s, she always taught me to be nice to animals, even though, you know…

Edgette: But maybe, you know…

Claudia: But the kids that she hangs around, that doesn’t fly.

Edgette: Right. And you’re smart and…

Heather: It’s not like they’re out sacrificing animals, Mom.

2–34

Claudia: But you’re not, if, if, like, you know, like the pot thing. She knows. She knows that that’s wrong. She knows that that’s not, you know, that’s not on our moral base. I raised her not, for that to be not on her moral base, and yet the people that she looks up to so highly were doing it.

Heather: Mom.

Claudia: So she was either afraid to say no, didn’t want to seem uncool, or I don’t know.

Edgette: Or something.

Claudia: I mean, it wasn’t because she thought, I don’t think she thought it was cool to do.

Heather: You know that both of my dads used to do it.

Claudia: When?

Heather: When they were teenagers.

Claudia: Okay.
Edgette: Are you still smoking?
Heather: No, I’m not.
Edgette: Does she save her best fights and only fights for you?
Claudia: Yes.
Heather: No.
Claudia: I am her doormat. Well, except for the teachers.
Edgette: Oh, the teachers at school?
Heather: Yeah. One.
Claudia: Yeah. I went to a parent teacher conference, and everybody gave me the key word manipulative, and I don’t know.

2-35
Bossy. It was like the word of the day.
Edgette: Okay. So she, you know, she gets bossy or manipulative, but certain people let her—
Claudia: Not with her dad.
Edgette: But not with her dad.
Claudia: In our family, it’s me.
Edgette: Okay, well, part of the problem, maybe he doesn’t know what some of the problems are. And I think he should know.
Claudia: Well, her—Between my husband and I, it’s me.
Edgette: Okay. With her stepdad. Okay.
Claudia: Her biological father, no, he doesn’t.
Heather: He doesn’t know anything.
Claudia: I kind of, she has so little time with him. I mean, if it’s two, three times a year that she gets a weekend.
Edgette: Oh, it’s that little?
Claudia: I don’t, I don’t want to spoil that.
Edgette: Oh, but you know—I understand. As soon as you said “two
or three weekends a year,” I figured you were trying to protect that time since it’s so little, at least it should be good.

**Claudia:** If she sees him three times a year and he spends two of those times screaming at her…

**Edgette:** But it can still be good, even if he knows the problems.

2-36

Him knowing the problems doesn’t mean it has to be bad, but it does make it real and it makes it more genuine, and it makes it a more honest relationship between the two of them.

**Heather:** But my dad’s not the kind of person who he’d be like, “Oh, you know, I still love you anyway.” He will sit there and yell at me, literally, days on end. He won’t, he will hardly talk to me for the entire time we’re there.

**Edgette:** Well, then he may not, and that might be his reaction, but protecting him isn’t helping Heather at all.

**Claudia:** I’m protecting her.

**Edgette:** It’s not protecting her.

**Claudia:** I was trying to, protecting her from…

**Edgette:** Okay, but she’s got to be accountable for what she does that have people get angry.

**Claudia:** That’s what I try to do.

**Edgette:** If he gets angry inappropriately or excessively, then so be it. Then it will be up to Heather to understand that, “All right, my dad carries a point too long or too far,” or whatever. But that’s for them to figure out. That’s for you and your dad to work out, to still love each other and enjoy the time together in spite of the fact that there are these things that he’d like you to do differently. But it would make it more balanced. You know.

**Claudia:** I would like her to be responsible for her own actions.
2-37

Heather: Which I am, but you just don’t realize it because…

Claudia: Should I tell her the Sega story?

Heather: I took responsibility for it, didn’t I? Yes.

Claudia: Eventually, yes.

Heather: No, I took responsibility for it right away, Mom, just as I do everything else.

Edgette: Tell me a little bit more about what happens when you guys start going at it at home and Heather’s trying to convince you that the dishes don’t need to be washed or don’t need to be washed now or whatever she does. Whatever you guys do. Because I want to see if there’s some other way that we can have you respond differently so, you know, and Heather hits a wall where it just didn’t become useful or of interest to her anymore to argue with you and falls more back on her.

Claudia: I’ve been trying to do that. It drives her insane.

Edgette: It drives her insane. So why did you stop doing it? You run out of ideas or it just got too much or she’s unrelenting?

2-38

Claudia: It’s just how strong I am that day. You know, how ready I am. If I’ve had a bad day and—excuse me—and she comes home and goes off on me, I just…Sometimes I just…She’s, she’s so persistent. She’s extremely persistent.

Heather: And so are you.

Claudia: Thank you. Extremely persistent. She will justify anything, even if she knows it sounds totally ridiculous, she will justify it for the sake of winning the argument.

Edgette: Oh, because she can win the argument and she drives you crazy with it. You know.

Claudia: Right. Yeah, and I just—
Edgette: You know, as kind as she is to a mouse, she likes watching you sort of …

Claudia: My chest starts getting tight.

Heather: The vein starts popping out of your forehead and the right side of your neck.

Claudia: Yeah. I mean, my chest starts tightening up and it’s like, “I’ve got to go.”

Edgette: Okay. Let’s see what else you could do instead of that, that doesn’t require you to do anymore. Because it sounds like if you have a bad day and you’re tired or you just really can’t marshal the reserves to deal, you know, you bow out or you say, “whatever.”

2-39

And I’m thinking, maybe there are some other things you could do that don’t involve you having to do more but leave her feeling that you haven’t responded to her in the way that she wants you to, which is to say, “Okay, Heather. Whatever.” You know what I mean?

Claudia: Then she goes, “Fine. Well then, I’ll just do it.”

Edgette: Do what?

Claudia: Whatever she wanted to do.

Edgette: Well, but that…

Claudia: “Can I go out an hour early?”

“No.”

“Why not?”

“Because that’s not the rules.”

“Well, just this one time? Or else I’ll come in early, an hour early tomorrow.” “Well, I’ll just—”

Edgette: You keep answering her?

Claudia: How would I respond? “Oh, well. Oh, well.”

Edgette: What if you were to say, look at her as if the idea of you even
responding to that is ludicrous. She knows the answer.

**Heather:** She does that every so often. I just give her a look right back.

**Claudia:** And she’s like, “What? Well? Well? Well? Well? Well?”

**Edgette:** Well, not a sarcastic look, but one like… “Do you really believe that I’m going to answer that?” And then go about your business. And what will she do?

**Claudia:** Be persistent.

**Edgette:** And she’ll keep coming at you.

**2-40**

**Claudia:** Yes.

**Edgette:** You say, “Excuse me. I’m going—“

**Claudia:** Until I’m screaming bloody murder and running upstairs, locking myself in the bedroom.

**Edgette:** What if you were to say, “I’m not discussing this anymore. You know the answer.”

**Claudia:** I’ve done that before.

**Heather:** I would go and sit in the rocking chair that’s in her office, and just sit there and stare at her until she gives me an answer.

**Claudia:** She, she, she knows when to bug me.

**Edgette:** Well, that’s pretty provocative in her case, yeah?

**Claudia:** When I’m knee-deep, when I’m knee-deep in office work.

**Edgette:** I know, but she’s—

**Claudia:** She sits down and stares at me.

**Edgette:** That’s pretty provocative. I mean, that’s—

**Claudia:** She is very…

**Edgette:** No, that’s, you know, that’s really overstepping her boundaries. That’s your office.

**Claudia:** Right.
Edgette: I mean, most kids will stop, even knocking on the door 20 times is less of a violation to your personal boundary than coming in and assuming a position in a chair and staring at you.

Claudia: Right. I’ve, I’ve gone over the edge before and had to put myself in time out. And I go and lock myself in my bedroom.

2-41
And she comes in to keep after me because she’s not done yet, and she’ll feel the doorknob and the doorknob is locked and she’ll just go pick it and come right in.

Edgette: Really.

Claudia: Even though I purposely locked myself in my bedroom saying, “I need to be alone.”

Heather: I did that like once.

Edgette: So when that happens, what privilege she lose, she knows she’s done for the day. I mean, that’s, that’s—Loses privileges for the day or more.

Claudia: She’s lost privileges long before that, and so why not (…).

Edgette: Well, that’s, that’s, she’ll decide if she wants to carry it on so her privileges are taken for a week or through the weekend, then so be it. The key is, though, I mean, locking yourself in the room serves a purpose of isolating you but then it’s her, your home.

Claudia: (…).

Edgette: It’s like, you’re home; she’s walking around the home, you know, sort of ruling the roost there with her temper and her persistence. She won’t do this with her stepdad?

Heather: My stepdad, he won’t leave. He’ll sit there and argue right back with me, stare me straight in the eye and sit there.

Claudia: He’s bigger and louder, so she usually backs down.

Edgette: Well, why would you even need all these people to back you down, push you back. Why?
Edgette: I mean, what’s all that about?

Heather: I don’t know. But the thing with picking the lock, she’s done that to me more than I’ve done that to her.

Edgette: Well, she’s the mom. She, you know, if she has reason to believe she needs to get in your room, a parent will do that if they think you’re in trouble or doing something you shouldn’t be doing.

Heather: Like I’ll, I’ll be like breaking down in tears and I’ll just run up to my room and lock it and I’ll need, like, some time in my room, and she does the same thing with hers—

Claudia: You don’t tell me that. I come in there wondering what in the world you’re doing. You’re freaking out in your bedroom.

Heather: You hear a lot of thumping noises. Me throwing things.

Edgette: So somehow, somehow Heather’s gotten the idea that what’s, you know, sort of, an egalitarian household where everything, the rules are the same for everybody and, you know, what you do, she can do.

Claudia: That, yeah, and she will tell, she will you that. I tell her, “I’m the parent.”

Edgette: Well, she can say that but it doesn’t mean that—

Claudia: And she’s like, “So what?”

Edgette: Right. Well, I think so much of the key will be is in finding ways not to respond to her. I mean, I hate to speak, or having it, to see her being restrained.

It’s ludicrous because she’s not a bad kid. She’s not a kid out of control where you say, “Okay, you need to bring somebody in to restrain the child until they can get in control.” She’s doing this because she knows ultimately she’s going to get what she wants.

Claudia: What she wants.
Edgette: And she’ll sit here and say the same thing very glibly. And I think then it becomes a matter of somehow structuring the discipline and maintaining the composure on your end, as difficult as that would be, so that she doesn’t get the response. You know, most of the time, I’d say, “Well, the kid can’t come in your office.” But you know, she comes in anyway, and then, do we want to call an outside party to drag her out? Well, not really. You know, that just gets so ridiculous.

Claudia: I wake up in the morning and she’s going through my sock drawer, you know.

Edgette: What is she—

Claudia: It’s like, “What are you doing?” “I need socks.” I’m like, “Where’s yours?”

Heather: I need socks, Mom.

Edgette: So then she loses privileges for that, right?

Claudia: No.

Edgette: She should.

Claudia: That’s a minor infraction in our house.

Edgette: But you know, no, I understand that relative to the bigger things, but in a very, very critical way, Heather feeling that she can walk into your bedroom and take your socks is outrageous. You know? It sets a precedent and allows her to just continue taking steps—It’s got to stop with that very small level. When Heather goes sock hunting, as benign as it seems—Because mothers and daughters share clothes, but—And she’ll probably say, “Oh, well, you know, I need socks. And la, la. The laundry’s not done. And we wear the same size and what’s it anyway? And I want…”

Claudia: See, I keep my clothes clean and she doesn’t so that’s where that comes in.

Edgette: Okay. But that’s got to fall on her.

Heather: But then she yells at me for doing laundry.
Edgette: There’s, there’s, you know, if she were to go into your sock, that’s where you say, “You know what? Honey, if you come into that drawer, you’re done for the night. You don’t go out tonight.” And then it falls on her. Because symbolically it says a lot, that Heather’s not respecting your boundaries and thinking she can kind of just go and move about the house in whatever way she pleases. And that needs to stop at the very, very tiniest level: a sock drawer.

2-45
Okay. She starts to argue, you’re not available to listen. If she gets in your face, you’re not available to listen and she loses the privileges. And the more that you frustrate her in her attempt to get you agitated enough so that you simply respond or ignore her, the more frustrated she gets, the more she’ll try and find a different way to interact with you.

I think she saves her, her best fights with you. I think she feels very connected to you. I think as much as you fight, I think she’s very connected to you, and I mean, if we had more time, we could look into why she feels she needs to balance her connection with you. And that she needs to always, always be doing that. We won’t have that time because we’re down to the last minute or so.

Claudia: Oh, wow.

Edgette: But for some reason, her relationship with you has these two dimensions where, where she seems connected and talks about traits you have in common and on the other hand, just comes barreling in and doesn’t let up.

2-46
But I think you need to stand firm with it, and understand that as frustrating as it is for you, it’s got to be more frustrating for her. And the simple boundary violations do, do…

Claudia: See, I try to balance the—

Edgette: The big stuff and the little stuff?

Claudia: Well, yeah. And the punishment with the crime.
Edgette: Her going into your sock drawer is a bigger deal than you think.

Claudia: It is. Yeah, to me, I feel like I have no privacy.

Edgette: Well, you don’t

Heather: Mom. That’s exactly how I feel, though, because you even told me yourself that you would read your diary if you found it.

Claudia: Because of what you’ve been doing.

Heather: No, Mom. I was—

Claudia: No, I didn’t say I’d read your diary. Did I say that?

Heather: Yes, you did, Mom. I remember you saying that.

Claudia: Okay. I might have said that.

Heather: And I think that’s invading my privacy, too.

Claudia: Well, when your daughter’s doing drugs, you need to stop her any way you can.

Heather: That was way before that, Mom. That was—

Claudia: It’s the people you’re hanging out with. You’re talking about sleeping around and who’s sleeping with who and who’s doing what drugs and who’s drinking what.

2-47

Heather: Mom, you told me that after I got arrested in June. Or the cops found me and Jonna…

Edgette: This is new information.

Heather: No, that was—

Claudia: When I called 911.

Edgette: [Inaudible]

Claudia: When I called 911.

Edgette: Oh, okay. Okay.

Claudia: That they had a talk with her about doing that, so.

Claudia: But yeah, when, when Heather’s in the situation she’s in, I…

Edgette: Well, sure. In, in an aura of secrecy and, you know, where parents worry, they do things that they wouldn’t do in peaceful times, so to speak.

Claudia: If I, yes, if I was, if I trusted her then I wouldn’t.

Edgette: Then you wouldn’t be reading her diary, because you shouldn’t be. But if you had reason to worry, then that brings in, it’s a whole other thing.

Claudia: I always thing of that Carroll O’Connor commercial. His son died of a drug overdose and just the look on his face, and he said, “Stop your kids any way you can.” You know.

Edgette: Right. I think if Heather were to be more…I think there’s things you could do to help your own situation. I think if you let your parents know more of what you were doing and who you were with, they, the pressure for them to be over you and wondering so much would be less.

2-48

The more you keep them in the dark, the more they’re going to be worrying and wondering and trying to get into your affairs in ways that you don’t think they need to. So I think—

Heather: The thing is, I do invite my friends over, but none of them like her. They can’t—

Claudia: They’ve never met me.

Edgette: It’s irrelevant.

Claudia: It’s all what you tell them.

Heather: No, Mom. It’s not. It’s exactly—

Edgette: You know, it doesn’t matter anyway.

Claudia: That’s true. That’s true.

Edgette: You really…It doesn’t matter.
Claudia: It’s me and her.

Edgette: (…)

Heather: I invite my friends over like…I’m like, “If you want to stop by…” They’re like, “Is your mom home?” “Well, yeah, probably.” It’s like, “Oh, well. Then I’ll just see you later.”

Claudia: Oh, well. That’s their problem. Not mine.

Edgette: So that’s…I mean…But I think there’s things you could do to help your case so you don’t feel so, you know, much that they’re on you. But I do think that the more that you frustrate this kid who’s a better kid than she’s showing herself to be—

Claudia: She is.

2-49

Edgette: You know. I think it could be helpful. All right?

Claudia: Okay.

Edgette: We’ll have to wrap up here. So hopefully some of these ideas you can take home. Do discuss them with your husband, and do let her dad know, biological dad, know what’s going on so he can be part of the program. Otherwise, he’s sort of marginalized out there and not really in a position to be able to help her, and your relationship gets sort of, you know, only the good stuff comes out and then it doesn’t make it really real between you and your dad. If he yells at you too much, tell him so and try and work it out. Okay? All right. Thank you for coming.

Claudia: Thank you very much.
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