Talking to Kids About Sex, Desire and the Power of Sexy

From *THE TALK: What Your Kids Need to Hear from YOU About Sex*
By Sharon Maxwell, Ph.D. (Avery 2008)

1. Sexuality is a great and powerful source of energy. Sexual energy is so important we depend on it for the survival of the human species! But "with great power comes great responsibility" (Spiderman) and learning how to be a responsible adult means learning how to control and direct your sexual energy.

2. When your body first starts to become sexually mature the energy of your sexy feelings can be overwhelming. In the same way that you need to learn how to control the power of a car, you have to learn how to control the power of your sexual feelings.

3. Learning to control and direct the power of sexual desire takes the same kind of muscle as controlling angry feelings or hungry feelings, the muscle of self-discipline. Learning to be in control of your desires gives you the freedom to make choices that won't hurt you or others.
    - What happens when you don't learn to control your anger? Your appetite?
    - How are you going to learn to control your desires?

4. Sexual desire, and its complement, the ability to elicit sexual desire in others, are powerful forces. Like all desires, sexual desire can be manipulated by what you see, hear, feel and smell.
    - Think of a time when your desires were manipulated by something you saw or heard.

5. Advertisers manipulate people's sexual feelings to get them to buy things. Teens are sold the idea that looking and acting sexy is a way to get power. Advertisers know that teens are insecure about their sexuality and that they can use that insecurity to sell products.
    - Think of an ad that tries to make you think you will be sexy if you have that product.

6. How we choose to dress and act has the power manipulate other people's sexual feelings. One person, dressed in a very sexy way, has the power to change the sexual energy in an entire room. Each of us has a responsibility to fit our level of sexy to the task at hand.
    - When is it O.K. to look sexy? When is it not O.K.?

7. People who know how to control their sexual energy have the freedom to choose how and when to use it. Cultures, religions and families have different guidelines about what a person is supposed to do with their sexual energy. These guidelines help people decided how they should behave. They teach you how responsible men and women use their sexual energy.
    - How do you think men and women should use their sexual energy?

8. Choosing to be sexual with another person is an act of intimacy. Sex should never be used to hurt, humiliate or control another person. Sex is not a way to gain power, acquire bragging rights, or a cure for loneliness.

9. Some people say it's OK to be sexual with someone if you're in love. How do you know if you love someone or if someone loves you? Do you know the difference between having sexy feelings for someone and loving feelings?
    - Love is a big subject. Who can you talk to about love?

10. Learning how your family and/or religion understands sexuality and the guidelines for how responsible people use their sexuality in an ethical way, is an important part of becoming a responsible adult.
    - Who can you talk to about making healthy and ethical sexual choices?

DrSharonMawell@DrSharonMaxwell.com