

TIPS FOR IMPROVING COMMUNICATION BETWEEN ADOLESCENTS AND PARENTS

What parents can do:

1. Give your undivided attention when your teenager wants to talk. Don't read, watch TV, or busy yourself with other tasks.
2. Listen calmly, and concentrate on hearing and understanding your teenager's point of view.
3. Speak to your teenager as courteously and pleasantly as you speak to a stranger.
4. Try to understand teenagers' feelings even if you don't always approve of their behavior.
5. Keep the door open on any subject. Be an "askable" parent.
6. Avoid belittling and humiliating your teenager and laughing at what may seem to you to be naive or foolish questions or statements.
7. Encourage teenagers to "test" new ideas in conversation by not judging their ideas and opinions, but instead by listening and then offering your own views as plainly and honestly as possible.
8. Help teenagers build self-confidence by encouraging their participation in activities of their choice (not yours).
9. Make an effort to commend your teenager frequently and appropriately.
10. Encourage your teenager to participate in family decision making and to work out family concerns with you.
11. Understand that teenagers need to challenge your opinions and your ways of doing things to achieve the separation from you that is essential for their own adult identity.

What adolescents can do:

1. Avoid looking at your parents as the enemy. The chances are that they love you and have your best interests in mind, even if you don't necessarily agree with their way of showing that.
2. Try to understand that your parents are human beings, with their own insecurities, needs, and feelings.
3. Listen to your parents with an open mind and try to see situations from their point of view.
4. Share your feelings with your parents SO that they will be able to understand you better.
5. Live up to your responsibilities at home and in school so that your parents will be more inclined to grant you the kind of independence you want and need.
5. Bolster your criticisms of family, school, and government with suggestions for practical improvements.
6. Behave as courteously mid considerately toward your own parents as you would toward the parents of your friends.

*Note: For more information on any of these tips or to learn more anger management, relaxation exercises, and/or dealing with an angry individual, please contact ASAP.

Adapted from: Papalia, D. E., & Olds, S. W. (1989). Human Development (4th Edition). Ne York, NY: MacGraw-Hill Book Cohipany, 384-385.