



Discipline and your Daughter 2

TOP TEN TIPS FOR TALKING WITH YOUR TEENAGER

"The fact that people are born with two eyes and ears but only one tongue suggests we ought to listen twice as much as we speak" Anonymous

1. Remember that during adolescence, communication generally decreases and that a child will confide less in their parents. This is a fairly normal process and should not be overreacted to.
2. Listen to what is being said; that is, try to understand your teenager's feelings and where she is coming from. Rather than thinking about arguments or retaliations, listen to her.
3. Stop what you are doing and look at your daughter. Listen and be available when she speaks to you. When you listen to your daughter 100%, notice what happens.
4. Be sure most of your communication is positive, not negative. Don't dwell on mistake, failures, misbehaviours or something your daughter forgot to do. Positive communication focuses on talk about her successes, accomplishments, interests and appropriate behaviour.
5. Talk with your daughter about her interests (music, sports, dance-team practice, friends). Have informal conversations with her where you are not trying to make a point, teach her something, compare her or aiming to impress her.
6. Avoid talking too much; that is, avoid giving long or too-detailed explanations, repeating lectures over and over. Excessive questioning or using other forms of communication like this will most likely only result in your daughter turning a deaf ear to you.
7. Try to understand your daughter's feelings. You do not have to agree or disagree, just make her aware that you understand how she feels. Do not try to explain away her emotions. There are times that you do not have to try to fix things or attempt to make your daughter feel better. The knowledge that someone understands how she feels may be the primary comfort that is needed.
8. Do not over-react to what is said. Remember, sometimes teenagers say things that are designed to get a reaction from you! In addition, do not say 'No' too fast. Sometimes it is better to think about the request and give a response later. In other words, think before you speak.
9. Create situations in which communication CAN occur (driving to a doctor's appointment, helping your daughter with one of her tasks or chores). Physical proximity is conducive to conversation. Televisions and/or a computer in your daughter's room can be an additional barrier to family communication: try to keep these in common areas. Wherever possible, create opportunities to do things WITH your daughter, rather than separately.
10. Avoid power struggles, confrontation and arguing matches. Your goal should be to have the communication move towards a compromise rather than a battle.



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Wherever possible, involve your daughter in decision making and setting consequences for her behavior from the outset.

Source and Further Reading:

Fontenelle, D. *Keys to Parenting your Teenager*

Eastman, M. *We're OK!: Secrets of Happy Families*

Websites:

Visit Michael Grose' latest newsletter@parentingideas.com.au for more tips on fostering communication at home