

- Are there experiences I want us to share?

Make the most of these days; tell your teens why you're being intentional. Invest in your relationship, not only to keep you from regret, but also to give your teens a solid footing for their lives ahead.

By Jessie Minassian, January 10, 2018

Going Further — Resources



131 Connecting Conversations for Parents and Teens: How to build a lifelong bond with your teen! by Jed Jurchenko will help you get to know your developing teen as you initiate conversations, argue less, and connect more.

- Find additional resources for parenting, marriage, and other seasons of life at <https://growfaithathome.org/>

Going Further — Church Support

Fusion is great places for students (grades 6-12) to meet friends and learn more about God, faith, and more! Fusion meets Sundays from 5:30-7:30 p.m. Get info here:

- <https://staffordcrossing.org/fusion>
- Email fusion@staffordcrossing.org

How to Love Your Teens & Help Them Like You Back

Helping families
trust and follow Jesus

@home

An eye roll (or 20). A smashed bumper. Indifference and disrespect. Eating the last of your favorite ice cream, for crying out loud! For some parents, the teenage years test the bonds of unconditional love like no other parenting season. We can't force our children to behave respectfully, love us wholeheartedly or—let's be honest—even like to be around us.

But here's the good news: After working with teens and their families for more than a decade, I've noticed four key actions that help parents connect with their teens, and, as a result, make it easier for those teens to appreciate their families in return.

Fight fair

Conflict isn't the problem; knowing how to resolve it peaceably is. In our home, we call healthy conflict resolution "fighting fair." The goal is to reach a compromise or truce with a greater understanding of each other, rather than wounding each other with dagger-like words or cold indifference. When we stick to the rules of a good, clean fight, the resolution is always better.

If you want your teens to engage in a meaningful discussion devoid of name-calling, low blows, running away, eye rolling, and dismissive speech, show them how. This means you:

- Listen in order to understand.
- Don't criticize things the other can't change, such as learning ability, physical agility and appearance.
- Don't use physical violence or coercion.
- Stick to one issue at a time.
- Believe the best until guilt is proven.
- Reserve your veto power for the biggest issues.
- Concede when you're wrong.
- Ask forgiveness when necessary (even when your disrespect was instigated by his or hers).

The key to modeling a fair fight with a hormone-charged teenager is to keep your own emotions under control. Proverbs 17:27 says, "Whoever restrains his words has knowledge, and he who has a cool spirit is a man of understanding."

Figure them out

Figuring out a teen sounds like an impossibility, akin to understanding quantum physics or capturing video of Bigfoot. While it might be impossible to wrap our minds around our teens' moody landscape and catawampus decision-making, we can get to know them as individuals. Sure, you know your son still gets hungry at 4 p.m. just as he did when he was 5, but do you know what his greatest fears are at 16? You might know your daughter would rather be grounded for a week than clean her room, but do you know who her best friends are and why?

Show love by taking time to know their evolving likes, dislikes, fears, hopes, conflicts, and accomplishments. Your teens are changing quickly, which means you have the joy and responsibility of continually discovering them—who they are and who they are becoming. Showing an interest in your teens might not spark instant reciprocation, but they will likely soften when they see you genuinely care to know the real them.

Free them

Our goal as parents is to help our kids reach adulthood before they leave our home, not hope they figure it out after they leave. To do this, you have to concede freedoms, even when teens don't use those freedoms wisely. Let them increasingly make their own decisions about food, sleep, homework, purchases and activities, and allow them to enjoy the rewards or suffer the natural consequences of their choices.

Allow them to try and fail with as little "rescuing" as possible. For example, if you've given your teen the freedom to drive your car and she crashes it, let her know she is responsible for the repairs. Or if he works hard to purchase a car, let him decide which set of wheels to buy (even if you believe it's a frivolous choice).

Foresee change

One of the only certainties about the teen years is that they will end. In a few years, your relationship will change. So before your teens launch into adulthood, ask yourself:

- How do I want to spend the days we have left together?
- Are there battles I can relinquish?