

**Parenting Teens Just Got Easier!**  
is free monthly eZine for parents of pre-teens and teens  
From Saso Seminars - Patt and Steve Saso  
**February 2008**

**Announcement Hot Links**

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**Saso High School Prep Announcements**

A common area of conflict between parents/teens is often triggered by grades and school performance. The following resources are developed for sixth – ninth graders.

**Spring Writing Workshop**

Writing helps you to think more clearly and improves your ability to learn more effectively. 6<sup>th</sup> – 9<sup>th</sup> grade

**Spring Math Workshop**

Strengthen core essential math skills needed to excel. 6<sup>th</sup> – 8<sup>th</sup> grade

<http://www.sasoseminars.com/hspt.html>

**HSPT Preparations**

Learn where your 7<sup>th</sup> grader really stands against HSPT standards. HSPT readiness assessments:

<http://www.sasoseminars.com/hspt.html>

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<http://www.sasoseminars.com>

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**Parenting Tip This Month:** Unsuccessful at connecting with your teen? That is because you are using the wrong approach. Here's another way.

**February 2008 Featured Article**

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**Communicating for Connection with Your Teen**  
By Patt Saso  
[www.SasoSeminars.com](http://www.SasoSeminars.com)

Parents and professionals are hungry to make positive impacts on youth.

We just returned from Washington, D.C. speaking at a national conference sponsored by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, "Working Together, Empowering Youth."

When a taxi driver learned we were parent educators, he shared his opinion about how "disrespectful teenagers are these days!"

"It frustrates me to the point of anger that my teen hardly talks to me! I care about his education and everyday I ask him how school is going. "Fine!" he says, and then heads straight to his room."

I asked how this was a problem.

"He is rude and insulting! I take away the computer and we end up arguing."

**What's wrong with this all-too-common scenario?**

Parents want the best for kids, but keep making the same mistake. Yet they expect different results.

**Stop taking things away to control behavior.**

Many believe it teaches a lesson. It doesn't.

Nor does it open up communication. When kids are punished, instead of disciplined, they end up with the 3 R's.

Rage...Resentment...Retaliation.

Discipline takes into consideration the need's of others and develops internal motivation.

Now, if this taxi driver had the next three pieces of information I'm about to share, his relationship with his son might be very different.

**Building bridges with words.**

Instead of generating hostility and negatively labeling teens (e.g., "rude") he might come to see adolescents in a whole new way.

Knowing this information may allow parents to enjoy teens, rather than trying to coerce them to be "responsible."

**Three ways to communicate for connection:**

**1. Understand developmental issues.**

Teenagers talk less to parents. It is not uncommon for teens to speak in one-word answers or in grunts. It isn't about you.

**2. Stop asking so many questions.**

Teenagers feel interrogated when we ask questions. Parents want to feel connected, but to teens it feels like an assault on their privacy (another developmental issue).

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Parents might learn to make observations or open-ended statements/questions that let teens know you are genuinely interested in them.

For example, you might say, "I saw you working hard last night studying for your biology test. Tell me how it went for you."

This invites dialogue more than if you had asked a yes or no question.

**The questions parents do have to ask.**

"Where are you going? Who are you going with? What time will you be home?"

**3. Practice empathic listening.**

Teens need to be understood, not judged. Empathic listening is not intellectual, it comes from the heart and tunes into the pain and needs of others. Connecting with love and understanding can diffuse anger and heal hurts.

"Empathy is a respectful understanding of what others are experiencing. Instead of offering empathy, we often have a strong urge to give advice or reassurance and to explain our own position or feeling. Empathy, however, calls upon us to empty our minds and listen to others with our whole being."

- Marshall B. Rosenberg, Ph.D., *Nonviolent Communication*

If the taxi driver understood developmental issues, practiced connecting with open-ended statements and listened empathically maybe there would be less hostility.

And maybe his teenager might communicate more.

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**Parenting Tips & Resources**  
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If you find yourself in constant conflict with your teen you might consider a parent coaching session with Patt.

<http://www.sasoseminars.com/coaching.html>

Every parent needs a little help every once in awhile. That's why we are committed to developing quality tools to lend a hand.

<http://www.sasoseminars.com/tools.html>

Parents, are you finding yourself constantly frustrated with your child's academic performance? Do you believe that she or he is not trying hard enough?

The problem might be that the basics are missing.

<http://www.sasoseminars.com/hspt.html>

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**Saso High School Prep Announcements**  
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**Do you really know how prepared** your seventh grader is for the HSPT?

Many parents are **shocked** to discover that grades DO NOT accurately correlate with their child's ability to do well on the HSPT.

**Learn where your *child really stands* against HSPT standards in math and English and where they need to improve.**

**HSPT Readiness Assessments begin now.**

<http://www.sasoseminars.com/hspt.html>

**NEW spring programs**

<http://www.sasoseminars.com/hspt.html>

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Until next time,

**Patt & Steve Saso**  
***Parenting Teens Just Got Easier***

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At Saso Seminars we are committed to inspiring parents to strengthen relationship and raise caring youth. For more resources on trouble-free parenting visit

[www.SasoSeminars.com](http://www.SasoSeminars.com)

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