

## April 2007 Issue

# Parenting Teens Just Got Easier: When Teens Lie

Parenting Teens Just Got Easier is a free monthly eZineFor parents of pre-teens and teens  
From Saso Seminars  
By Patt and Steve Saso

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### This Month's Parenting Tip:

Lying can be destructive to relationships. It can also lead to an opportunity for needed learning, growth and change. This month we discuss six steps parents can take to get teens to stop lying and what to do when they do.

### Two Announcements:

#### 1. Saso High School Prep:

Increase your chances of getting into the Catholic High School of your choice and earn better math and English grades! Summer HSPT programs available:

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

#### 2. Date change on FREE teleseminar:

Parents are you tired and frustrated by the ongoing conflict between you and your teen?

#### “How to Reduce Conflict between You and Your Teen”

is a FREE teleseminar for our subscribers only.

For more details see below. To register:

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

Please pass on Parenting Teens Just Got Easier to those in your network.

To leave list or change email address, scroll to bottom.

### When Teens Lie

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*Parenting Teens Just Got Easier*

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

“What do you do when you know your child is lying to you?” and

“How do I stop my teen from telling lies?”

We received these questions in a recent seminar and have decided to address them in this newsletter.

#### Parents sometimes lie.

People stretch the truth from time to time; it is not just a teenage problem. Adults lie about being sick to get a day off from work and even call in sick for their student. Parents sometimes lie to their kids.

One young man shared that his dad promised to take him to a basketball playoff game. He was excited and bragged to his friends.

Two days before the game his dad regretfully had to cancel. He had an urgent business trip.

On Saturday, the boy called his dad to ask an unrelated question and in the background...he heard the roar of the crowd. He was devastated.

#### Teens also sometimes lie.

When Steve speaks to young people and asks them to raise their hand if they have ever lied to their parents, every hand goes up.

#### Punishing doesn't help teach truthful behavior.

The automatic response to lying is to punish – taking away privileges, grounding, or restricting from friends. This does little to stop the lying, but does make parents feel better about taking some kind of action.

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Once parents have labeled a child a liar some try to trap the kid by asking questions they (the parents) already know the answer to.

One dad contacted the teacher to confirm whether his son's paper had been turned in. It hadn't. When his son returned dad inquired if he got the paper in. He said yes.

Suddenly dad erupted. What followed was a major breakdown in communication. The relationship was seriously damaged. And trust was broken even more when the son discovered the dad set him up.

### Why do teens lie?

Teens usually lie: to protect their privacy, to be able to do things that they know (or think) their parents will not allow them to do, to save face, to avoid getting in trouble, or to protect their friends.

### Examine your role in the face of deception.

Instead of focusing on the lie itself, it may be helpful to look at the underlying reasons and to respond to that. It may be that the parent is holding an inflexible position, or is unwilling to discuss a possible compromise concerning a need or want of the teenager.

### A parent's response to lying may also contribute to the problem.

Our neighbor Gina does not approve of her daughter's choice of friends. Mom fights constantly with Jennifer not permitting her to hang out with her friends on weekends.

Friends are teens' whole life!

Nothing will stop Jenn from being with her friends, so she lies to her mom about where she is going.

The cycle is so sad to watch...Mom catches Jenn then punishes her by restricting her freedom, which leads to further lying.

### Focus on connection, rather than correction.

My suggestion was to stop swimming up stream. And place attention on relationships and long-term outcomes, not on specific problems and behavior. Allow her daughter to be with friends with fair and reasonable limits. Maybe invite them over to get to know them better.

In parent-teen interactions, honest communication is fundamental. Mom needs to be straightforward about her concerns and stop trying to manipulate behavior by punishing. Once mom is an ally, Jenn needs to be upfront about who she is with and where she is going. With dependable communication negative issues may diminish.

### When the parent catches a lie:

- 1) **Pause and reflect before reacting.**
- 2) **Seek understanding.** What might be going on inside your child? Try to understand their perspective.
- 3) **Examine the motivation.** Why the necessity to lie? What is your teen's unmet need? As parent, what might be your role and participation?
- 4) **Be active in partnering with your teen.** Be an ally. Work towards resolving unmet needs.
- 5) **Be flexible and adaptable.** The health and safety of your child are non-negotiable, but be open to allowing your teenagers to have their experiences with as little interference as possible.

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6) **Model honesty.** Observe when you are being dishonest, especially in your parenting.

Remember no matter what you do or what kind of relationship you have, your teen may lie from time to time.

By responding from an empathic place (rather than from a position of harshness) and by setting fair and adaptable limits, you will model the gift on honesty in relationships and may help keep teen's lying to a minimum.

**For more parenting tools go to:**

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

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### **Saso High School Prep:**

Increase your chances of getting into the Catholic high school of your choice and improve your grades!

**Summer HSPT programs** available for students entering the 8<sup>th</sup> grade in the fall:

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

**English Writing Workshop** for current 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> graders:

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

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### **FREE TeleSeminar for subscribers only:**

We realize that not everyone can come to our seminars -- that is why we hold free TeleSeminars occasionally. Our next one is:

"How to Reduce Conflict between You and Your Teen"  
April 24, 2007  
1:00 pacific time

### **Are you tired and frustrated by the ongoing conflict between you and your teen?**

Arguing is often seen as detrimental to relationships, but it doesn't have to be this way. Learn the secrets of transforming conflict into harmony and discover better ways of talking and listening that will improve your relationship. Learn to clear up misunderstandings and hurt before they get out of hand.

- Identify areas of common conflict with teenagers
- Discover new skills for improving communications
- Generate effective solutions to your conflict dramas
- Learn to listen even when you don't agree
- Experience greater love and understanding with your teen
- Learn how conflict can strengthen relationships

To register go to:

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Peace,  
Patt & Steve Saso

<http://www.SasoSeminars.com>

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