

Parenting Teens Just Got Easier!

is a free monthly eZine for parents of pre-teens and teens from Saso Seminars
by Patt and Steve Saso

Do You Need Parent Coaching? April 2008

Parenting Tip This Month: Do you find yourself screaming louder to get your teen to listen? Parenting is about how you handle yourself. Try something different.

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April 2008 Featured Article
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Do You Need Parent Coaching?

By Patt Saso

www.SasoSeminars.com

Before leaving the house, I reminded my teen daughter to clean the kitchen. Watching a movie, she nodded affirmatively.

Upon returning hours later, the kitchen was untouched. I felt discouraged. "Khaila, I notice the kitchen is unfinished."

"Why do you get upset over such an insignificant thing, Mom? It's really no big deal. I'll get to it later"

"I'm not mad, just frustrated. You said -- "

"Listen to you. You're getting mad about nothing! You're mad right now."

"Khaila, I'm not mad, it's just you told me you would clean it."

"Why do you always have to yell?"

"I'm not shouting." I was intentionally staying calm.

"You are yelling at me! You yell every day! You think you're not yelling but you hear wrong. You're such a hypocrite." Then she shot up from the couch and headed into her room slamming the door behind her.

Reality check

Steve witnessed everything. Wanting a confirmation I asked was I hollering.

"No."

Anyone with teens has probably experienced a scenario like this. The storyline may change, but the response from the teen is the same.

Why teens see parents as angry

One explanation is the developing mind. The prefrontal cortex (PFC) is under reconstruction and makes it difficult for young people to read emotions accurately.

The PFC is implicated in a wide range of processes including: planning, setting priorities, and organizing thoughts. It is also involved with restraining impulses, weighing consequences and regulating emotions. Sound judgment and exercising impulse control is challenging.

A teen's inability to practice reasonable behavior -- for example, I'll finish my homework; complete chores, then text my friends -- may very well be brain immaturity, rather than a personality flaw.

Reducing conflict between you and your teen

While teens' brains are maturing, there are things parents can do to reduce arguments. The following check list is from *Why Do They Act That Way?* by David Walsh, Ph.D.

Assessing your parenting skillfulness:

YES NO

1. I am a good listener.
2. I can tolerate some adolescent mouthiness.
3. I am able to avoid power struggles with my teenager.

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4. ____ ____ I am able to remain calm even when my teen son or daughter isn't.
5. ____ ____ I understand the brain's role in teen miscommunication.
6. ____ ____ I can avoid generalizations when talking with my adolescent.
7. ____ ____ When communication becomes tense, I can stay focused on one issue at a time.
8. ____ ____ I never engage in name-calling or put-downs when talking with my teenager.
9. ____ ____ I never swear or use foul language toward my adolescent or other people.
10. ____ ____ I do not accept foul language or abusive language from my teen.

Keeping lines of communication open

For reducing conflict and establishing wholesome communications you want to score higher in the YES column. More NO's suggests a need for change.

Developing new parenting skills

Parenting teens is a different ballgame. Shifting from helicopter parenting to becoming coach-like is a necessity. Otherwise conflict may increase and get out of control.

If you've come up short, consider parent coaching. Here's how it helped Dolores:

"I realize that by trying to stay involved, I've been asking way too many questions. From Anthony's point of view, I'm invading his privacy. I'm also relieved our differences are pretty common, and that I am not doing everything wrong. Overall, he's a pretty good kid, but he is a completely different person than he was last year, just as you described in your book. He questions my beliefs and politics and often has opposing opinions! Thanks for your guidance."

Before releasing this article I asked my daughter permission to use our story. She responded:

"This makes ME sound bad when YOU are the one who always gets mad. You are making yourself sound good. You make yourself into a perfect parent when you're not. You're such a hypocrite. You should pay me for using this story."

Whose side are you on?

It's not easy being a parenting expert! I agreed to give her a buck for every new subscriber to **Parenting Teens Just Got Easier** after reading this column!

For more parenting tips and tools visit:

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Until next time,

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