
Parenting Teens Just Got Easier!
By Patt and Steve Saso
When Families Fall Apart
May 2009

Parenting Tip this month: Do you find the same negative scenario being played out between you and your teen? Learn how to get unstuck.

May 2009 Featured Article

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When Families Fall Apart

By Patt Saso

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We all know that place. That yucky feeling inside of us when things start to fall apart.

Family life is so painful that driving back from work you dread going home.

It seems like forever when you've heard laughter in your home or had any fun as a family.

You are disillusioned with the state of your family's development. Family members are off doing their own thing, feeling alienated from one another.

And when something goes awry, big or small, there's a quick escalation of tension and conflict.

Family members are unable to interact without building a bonfire. This is when things fall apart.

It is a lonely life.

As head of the household it is your responsibility to take leadership to do something different within the family.

A common problem is that many parents try to change their child's behavior, without taking any responsibility for their role in creating the unhealthy family dynamic. I see this over and

over again in my counseling practice. Parents want their child to change, not them.

You need to realize that parenting is about you, not your child. And it is important for you to lead your family into a healthier direction. Here is what you can do.

Steps parents can take when things start to fall apart.

1. Begin by admitting there is a problem.

If you don't admit the problem then you will keep doing the same thing over and over again, expecting different results. Acknowledge that there is a problem before it gets out of hand.

2. Eliminate feelings of alienation in the family.

Find ways to engage in behaviors that facilitate cohesiveness and intimacy within the family. Start by looking at the way you talk.

Ask yourself: "Is the way I am talking to my teen inviting him in or pushing him away?"

3. Achieve the ability to laugh together.

Pardon the cliché, but life is really too short. Spend time building relationships and having fun. Put your attention on promoting love, rather than the righteous arguing that creates separation.

4. Devise methods of coping when under stress.

When tension and crises infiltrate your family, have a plan to deal with it. Be prepared for when

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things begin to fall apart. Learn strategies that stop the escalation. Then implement the plan.

5. Devote more time to your immediate family.

Sounds so obvious but many families spend more time with external relationships than with their own family. This can include sports, cub scouts, dance, piano lessons, youth group, school or club activities, ect, ect, ect.

Over and over again I experience this in families. The parents keep the child so busy there is no time to even think! This is part of the problem. Not the solution.

Slow down. Engage in real conversation.

It takes humility and courage to parent with leadership and wisdom. It is much easier to point the finger and blame.

It can be painful to confront problems and unhealthy family dynamics, especially when you realize that your parenting style may be contributing to the problem. But the rewards far outweigh the cost, and following these steps can lead to happier and healthier families.

If you need help getting unstuck call me and set up a coaching session or explore some of our parenting resources. They can help.

Visit our website at <http://www.sasoseminars.com/tools.html> for information on our books and audio programs.

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Patt & Steve Saso
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