

Effective communication with your teens:

As a parent of 2 teenagers, and as Lions Quest Skills for Adolescence programme Coordinator in my organization, I do have some experience dealing with teens. Now, I'm no expert, but I have been around teens enough to know how to communicate with them effectively and get them to listen to you. I'm going to share some of that experience with you, so hopefully you too can start communicating with your teens.

First of all, teenagers are starting to spread their wings so to speak, independently of their parents and so they wish to be spoken to like an adult. Now if your teen is a young teen like 13 or 14, they are nowhere near adult hood, although I'm sure they all wish they were. However, they still need to be spoken to on an adult level. That doesn't mean they will respond on an adult level, unfortunately. But, they are looking to you to be the adult, whether they are conscious of it or not.

One thing I experienced with my youngest, who is now 14, is that whenever I'd say something like, "I know how you feel" or "I understand I went through the same thing", she'd always respond, "but you're not ME, you don't know how I feel, or what I'm thinking". Kids and teens can't understand that we were once teenagers too and that YES, we did go through the same things they're going through. Though times have changed dramatically since I was a teenager, the emotions, hurts, feelings and pains were still the same. The medium used to deliver the hurt may be different (say a text message) the emotions are still the same.

On that note, our teens are living in a different world than we grew up in. I think teens are communicating a lot more with each other through texting and Face book. I think there are a lot more chances for teens to react immediately to a situation than when we were younger. They don't have to wait for a phone call, or to see a person face to face, communication is immediate, and therefore so are the reactions. There is no time to cool off and think about why someone said or did something. So, as a parent we need to keep that in mind when talking to our teens about stuff they're going through.

Another huge factor we as parents should remember when it comes to communicating with our teens is to talk to them how we want them to talk to us. If we're always yelling at them or speaking in a demanding tone, that's how they'll speak to us. Ever notice how a child "sounds just like their mother or father"? Our children learn from us. Yes, there are other outside influences, but their initial communication is learned from their parents.

So, when you want to speak to your teen about an issue, say something like "hey, I'd like to talk to you about something. Let's talk after dinner." They will appreciate that you care enough to make time for them. Then when addressing the issue, start off by saying something like, "I understand this happened or that happened". Don't be accusatory because this will just turn them off right away and put up a defensive block. Let them know you love them and you're there to help them, no matter what.

No-Nonsense Parenting for Today's Teenager – Learn how to feel like a good parent even when your teenager hates you. Also learn how get your disrespectful Teenager to LISTEN to what you say & RESPECT you as their parent while getting peace back in your home.