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Parenting Made Easy System

**NAVIGATING THE CHOPPY WATERS OF
THE TEENAGE YEARS**

**DAY 13: ENCOURAGEMENT &
MOTIVATION**

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In a nutshell – Today, we look at lots of ways that you can encourage your teenager, and make good behaviour the norm ...

Welcome back!

Just like adults, teenagers have emotional needs. Here is how you, as their parent, can meet those needs easily for them:

Paying them attention

By taking an interest in their lives and their world – the things they like and dislike, their worries, their favourite films, their favourite musical artist, their computer games, and things that make them laugh.

Accepting them

Showing your teenager that you love them is so important, even if you don't like their behaviour. By not expecting them to be perfect, and accepting them as they are, you build their self-esteem and confidence. By giving them "space" to be themselves, you allow them to flourish.

Showing respect

Showing your teenager that you respect their opinions and views keeps the key energy of a family working well. Ask your teenager for their thoughts, their ideas or their solutions and let them hold different views to you without getting stressed out – they aren't a clone of you!

Showing appreciation

We all like to feel valued and appreciated, so be aware of thanking them for putting their dirty cups in the dishwasher, bringing down their washing, or getting their homework done. Notice the small things, catch them doing something good, and watch your relationships really improve.

Offering encouragement

Just believe in them and tell them that you do! Be positive, praise and encourage them. Be their cheerleader and be proud of them. This will keep them going in difficult times when they feel lost, fed up or discouraged.

Showing affection

Although they may not need constant hugs and kisses any more, a friendly hug, an arm around their shoulders or a playful squeeze keeps everyone's emotional tank topped up

Showing approval

We all need to feel the approval and love of someone and teenagers are certainly no exceptions. In fact, they need your approval even more than others as they are learning the ropes of growing up. So let them know when you approve of their choices, for owning up or for being honest.

Offering support

Helping them with their homework may well be a thing of the past, but helping them decide their GCSE's, or to fill out a form for a job interview, all provide support and guidance, and show that you care. It's a need that a young person really values.

Providing comfort

Noticing when your teenager is fed up, low, disappointed or upset, and showing empathy rather than judgement, is a vital way of showing you care. By getting in a take-away or watching a DVD together you can help them through tough times naturally.

Providing security

Your kids need to know you are there for them no matter what. Although it's hard to find time for "quality time" with your kids, it's the best investment you can make in your teenager's future – a regular, focused activity together, that you both enjoy, really builds bonds – and gives you a chance to chat, have fun and enjoy time together.

Here are some examples:

- A sport or physical activity
- Going on a trip, or shopping expedition
- Learn and play a new computer game together
- Prepare a meal together
- Watch a family film or comedy series together
- Go out for a coffee, for breakfast, or for a meal
- Help them with a project, hobby or school work
- Ride a bike or go for a walk
- Have a girlie day or a makeover

Now it's your turn!

Organise a time and activity together with your teenager. It might be something that you have chosen from the list above, or it might be something entirely different.

When you get back, get your pen and paper, then reflect and make notes on the following:

- What did you do?
- How did you decide together?
- What did you most enjoy about the activity?
- What did you enjoy the least?
- If you had a disagreement how did you sort it out and resolve it?
- What new thing did you learn about yourself or your teenager?
- Is there anything you'd like to change about yourself or improve on for next time?

This focused time together is brilliant for staying connected, building bridges and showing interest in your teenager and you'll both build the memories that last a lifetime.

Habits to avoid!

Experience has shown me some classic ways to switch off your teenager! I've made a list of them here to help you from making the same mistakes as me and hundreds of parents I've coached over the years!

Asking too many questions

"Why did you say that?" "What did you say?"

Being bossy

"Do your homework right now and don't argue"

Lecturing

"You should know better at your age"

Criticising/Shaming

"How could you be so stupid?"

Pitying

"I'm so sorry for you, you poor thing"

Rescuing – doing it for them

"Alright, I'll do your homework for you so you don't get into trouble"

Jumping to conclusions

"Late again! I suppose you've been up to no good getting back at this hour!"

Threatening and shouting

“If you don’t shape up you’re grounded for a week”

Always knowing best

“I told you that would happen, didn’t I!”

Most of us find ourselves lecturing, ordering, even threatening our teenagers, or jumping to conclusions, but if we always presume the worst and speak to our kids like this we block communication. And effective communication is what builds a lasting relationship between you.

Here are my tips for improving communication:

- Remain silent most of the time!
- Be aware and sensitive to your child’s body language, e.g. whether they look disappointed, worried, angry, excited, pleased etc.....
- Show you are really listening.
- Reflect back the gist of what they have said to you to check you have understood them clearly.
- Avoid giving advice or offering suggestions (Tough, I know, but believe me this one REALLY works).
- Show your teenager (by the tone of your voice and body language) that you really respect and care and are genuinely trying to understand where they are coming from.

A Quick Recap

- Teenagers have emotional needs, and there are lots of ways that you can encourage and meet them, like offering support, respect, and encouragement.
- Find time for “quality time” with your teenager.
- Avoid the habits that block communication with your child.
- Communication is key!

Next time ...

We look at your parenting style ...

See you then!



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