

*Sue Atkins*  
The Parenting Expert

Parenting Made Easy System

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

**DAY 14: YOUR PARENTING STYLE**

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**In a nutshell** – Today, we look at your parenting style ...

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*Welcome back!*

The secret to parenting a teenager is to have clear rules - not too many of them - and to be consistent in applying them, whilst allowing some flexibility to adapt them as your teen matures.

If you find yourself just saying “no” to everything you will only increase your teenager’s rebelliousness. It’s about knowing when to choose your battles, presenting a united front, negotiating and discussing things together openly.

Let’s look at your parenting style first:

Are you a **“Bull in a China Shop”**? The slightly aggressive, going in with all guns blazing, not listening to the other person’s point of view, and always feeling you are right and must have the last word! And do you tend to go “over the top” with the sanctions you set? Like grounding your son for a month as he came in late last Thursday? This style is confrontational and often you’ll find the conflicts and rows get worse.

Are you **“Anything for a Quiet Life”**? The passive type who hopes it will all go away by itself and who hates confrontation and hassle? Do you sometimes let unacceptable or risky behaviour go unchallenged? Do you sometimes let your kids do what they want and find they don’t have much respect for you? Do you often feel like a bit of a doormat and hold onto resentments and act like a victim in the whole teenage zone scenario?

Or are you **“The Silent Seether”**? The passive, yet silently angry type who “pretends” you don’t mind about something when it’s obvious that you really do! Do you often reply

  
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“Nothing’s wrong” when asked what’s the matter but create a tense atmosphere while sighing a lot? Do your kids enjoy winding you up but are they losing respect for you?

Perhaps you’re the **“Do what you want but don’t get into trouble”**? Were you over-controlled as a child? Do you hate confrontation and saying “no”? Slightly frightened of this powerful teenager with exploding hormones?

Are you a **“I don’t want to let you go”** over-protective parent? Frightened of letting your teenager grow up and have let your own life slip by, putting all your energy into your child’s life with no life of your own?

Are you a **“Hard to Please”** parent who expects a great deal from yourself as well as your teenager? Does your teen feel nothing they do is ever good enough so they’ve stopped trying?

Or are you **“The Assertive and Confident Parent”** who gives your teenagers some freedom to make mistakes but are willing to speak up clearly and calmly about your concerns, values and expectations? Are you willing to be temporarily unpopular but mature enough to take the long-term view to make sure your kids are safe? Do you try to understand your teenager’s point of view and are willing to negotiate with them? Do you teach your kids that all of their actions have consequences and you have to choose the battles and stand offs you go in for? Do you present a UNITED FRONT with your partner? (At least in public!)

# Now it's your turn!

Using the list above as a guide, take a pen and paper and write down what sort of parent you think you are. Answer the following:

1. Which parenting style do you most relate to?
2. How different are you to your own parents?
3. What changes could you make to your parenting style?
4. What would be some of the benefits to your family life if you made some small changes?

Whatever your style you have the best interest of your teenager at heart but it's helpful to be clear about your style so you can modify, change or adapt it to handle the changes happening during the teenage zone.

Giving your teenager choices encourages co-operation as they feel they have some control over their lives.

## How responsible is your teen?

How responsible is your teenager at the moment? Take a moment to go through this checklist:

- ✓ Do they help with any household chores?
- ✓ Can they make their own packed lunch?
- ✓ Do they clear up after themselves in the kitchen?
- ✓ Do they tell you where they are going?
- ✓ Do they tell you if they're going to be late back?
- ✓ Can they use the washing machine
- ✓ Can they iron their own clothes?
- ✓ Can they cook a simple meal?
- ✓ Do they pack for themselves when they go away?
- ✓ Are they generally responsible with money?
- ✓ Do they usually get their homework done on time?
- ✓ Do they ask before borrowing something?

# Now it's your turn!

How can you encourage, expect and create more independence in your teenager? What can you say, how can you say it, and what body language can you use? Use your next "Family Talk Time" to set clear house rules where everyone shares responsibility for everyday tasks that normally get left to you.

Make a note of how you get on!

## A Quick Recap

- We all have a parenting style. Which is yours?
- A few small changes to your parenting style can transform your relationship with your teenager.
- Giving your teenager choices increases their sense of responsibility.
- Giving your children responsibility for things encourages their sense of independence as well.

**Next time ...**

When conflict and arguments occur there really are two sides!  
How can you see the issue from your teenager's perspective, and  
how can they see it from yours? Next time, we'll look at the art of  
negotiation ...

*See you then!*



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As seen in:



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