**Fixing a Troubled Parent-Teen Relationship - 10 Easy Steps to Better Interactions**

By John Lee, Editor

Whatever happened to those magical days when your child looked up to you, wanted your advice and begged to spend time with you? The truth is, adolescence is tough at the best of times, but when your son or daughter gets in trouble with drugs or alcohol - and with all the behaviors that tend to accompany these problems, it’s just so easy to get mired down in the quicksand of negativity and mistrust.

And once negativity becomes a habit, communication and understanding disappear - just when your teen needs you most. So wherever you are with your teen, take a step back and consider if there’s anything you could do to improve your interactions - and by doing so, improve your parenting. As a way to get started, here are 10 clear (but not necessarily easy) ways to improve your parent teen-child relationship, starting from today.

**10 Ways to Improve Your Parenting ....**

Adopting the following 10 guidelines won’t fix all your problems, but it might just repair the relationship enough to give you a place of trust and love to start from.

1. **Listen, but don’t judge.** Few things quiet an already recalcitrant adolescent faster than feeling unfairly judged.Adolescence is basically a period to make and learn from mistakes. You will see your teen son or daughter messing up.This is what they’re supposed to do! Listen to them and help them if you can, but never judge them for the error of theirways.

**2. Make sure you show the love you feel.** You know how you feel…but do they still know?

**3. Make time to spend time with your teen son or daughter.** When they were little you had to be around, watching and teaching. Now, they don’t seem to need you as much andyou’re more free to pursue your own goals and hobbies.But though they don’t need you around the clock as they once did, they still need your attention and guidance, so makesure you make time to spend time - even when you don't seem to have to...

**4. Make it a routine to have a routine.** What happened naturally a few years ago takes concerted effort today. Your teen son or daughter may want to spendmore time alone or with friends (rather than in your company) so you may have to work to make this happen.Make a routine out of spending time together - like a weekly fun outing - to help you stay connected.

**5. Don’t solve your teen’s problems, but support them in their efforts to problem-solve.**

Your teen needs to learn healthy problem solving skills - it’s a necessary developmental task of adolescence. When you intervene to solve their problems, they don’t learn to fend for themselves, or worse, they internalize a sense of inability at the cost of their self esteem.

**6. Make sure to praise your teen child when he or she deserves it.** Does it feel like all you do is correct and complain? Well, then make sure to seize every legitimate opportunity to praise positive behaviors! If you only complain or bring negativity, you’ll soon get tuned out.

**7. Discipline when necessary, but always criticize the behavior, never the person.** And if you say something you don’t mean in the heat of the moment, make sure you apologize and correct your mistake.

8. **Be the one that sets the bar high – be courteous and polite.** It’s too easy to get pulled into a spiral of negativity:

-He is rude to you so you respond curtly.

-The next time you see him, you worry he’ll be rude again so to protect your own feelings, you close yourself off.

-He feels this and responds to your emotional-shunning with further negative behaviors.

-And so on...You have to be the one that breaks this negative cycle!

**9. Ask questions and try to stay involved.** Show your interest and caring by asking questions and staying aware of what’s important.

**10. Help your teen learn to delay gratification.** It’s often easier to just give-in, but teaching delayed gratification is so important, so pick your battles, and help your sonor daughter learn the value of patience.1

References

1. SAMHSA: Parenting Teens Advice