

4 WAYS TO HAVE A BETTER
RELATIONSHIP W YOUR TEEN



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LISTEN WITH HEART

In an age of 'likes' and virtual fake friends and 'I'm so busy', we often forget how to listen to our teens. Learning how to take the time to listen, pick up on signs of distress or 'just faking it to appease you' as well as knowing when to stay silent, are all essential to how we communicate effectively with our teens. At this age, the last thing a teen wants is to hear another lecture. And if the way you come across to them is to lecture them about something they failed at, then all ears are off. One simple approach to handle more challenging discussions is to ask questions like 'what can we do next time to help you remember to take out the trash?' instead of 'why didn't you take out the trash?' And then really listen to them with your heart instead of jumping in right away with a solution, even if you have one.

ZONE IN ON THEIR STRENGTHS

At this age, there are a lot of things you can nit pick and nag them on. Their messy rooms. Not doing their chores. Slipping grades. Eating junk food. The way they dress, color their hair. But realize this is also the age when they are transitioning from however they were parented as a child into the first taste of being a 'big person'. It's their first stab at taking over control of things that perhaps they were not able to as a young child. The transition could be really difficult for them, and to focus on all the things that you don't like and still want control over can likely put them over the edge if they are already struggling. This is not to say to ignore all of those things. But perhaps listen with heart and come up with a compromise. Together. And then, focus on their strengths. Daily. Yes, on certain days you have to dig deep, but you can find their strengths and tell them about them. Remind them of what a fabulous artist they are when they create. Remind them of how hard they work to overcome. Remind them what a good friend they are.

BE OPEN TO LEARNING FROM THEM

Often as parents, we think we know more than our teens because after all, we've been there, right? Not always the case. We think we do because that's how our society has defined our role to be, as parents. But when we go into difficult discussions holding this viewpoint with our teens, we often miss very valid points they are making. For example, if I want my teen to not always be on their phone, yet they see me on my phone all the time, their 'flight or fight' teen brain is going to either 1) ignore you or 2) say something like 'yea, but you're on your phone all the time too' And you take offense to this (most likely because you are on your phone a lot), but if you're open to learning from your teen, you will see that this is a sign that he/she needs you to be a better role model for them. Perhaps both of you (or the family) could use less phone time, and more special time doing other things together.

LEARN TO BALANCE YOUR BODY, HEART, MIND & SOUL IN A HEALTHY WAY

Not every parent wants to hear or believe this. They ask “What does this have to do with having a better relationship with your teen?”

Well, the reality is that the secret to becoming a happy, motivated, fulfilled adult is learning to balance these 4 body systems as you grow from your teen years. But often, we, as the parent, never experienced this growing up. Your body has to be one in which you feel your most positive self in (being comfortable in your own skin). Your heart has to feel and process emotions in a healthy manner. Your mind has to strengthen with positive thinking rather than self doubt. And your soul will shine through when your body, mind and heart are feeling harmonious. The more we learn how to do this ourselves, the better we are able to react and work well with our teens. The side effect: You’ve now become a better role model for your teen, and they will remember this as they move into adulthood.