

Do You Earn the Right to be Heard ?

How can parents help their children make decisions now that will determine how they make them later in their own life?

Your communication with your child is so very important when it comes to winning and training him for Christ. Many teens "tune out" their parents. Why? Parents may shout a lot or they just are not great communicators, but instead talk a lot. The right to be heard must be earned.

I hate to admit it, but when my sons would approach me while I was reading or working on a project, I did not always give them my full attention. To really listen, one must stop what you are doing, look straight into your child's eyes, and communicate in a two-way conversation.

Never alienate your child by your lack of interest in what he is saying. Something that seems trivial to an adult can be earth-shattering to a teen.

Today the conversation may not be as important to you as it is to your daughter, but if you don't listen today, later in life when she really does have a problem she will be already "programmed" to think you don't care or want to hear what she has to say.

She will need your guidance, but she will go somewhere else. She may choose the wrong guidance in another venue.

Teens and children need the undivided attention a parent can give. Eye contact and a show of genuine interest is so very important. . . No matter how trivial or mundane the subject seems to you.

Begin listening today !

Are You Your Teen's Head Cheerleader ?

Do you stop to think before you tease your teenager? A lot of times we tease about their size or weight, hair or the way they dress. Instead, we should be their "head cheerleader".

Your thirteen old daughter can be most certainly be devastated by calling her "the Amazon" because she has suddenly shot up a lot taller than her peer group. Teens, especially in junior high, are completely focused on themselves. They concentrate on nothing more than themselves, how they look and what others think of them. Teens are experiencing drastic change, both physically and emotionally. Oftentimes, it is happening so quickly they enter into a tail spin.

Parents can spend time complimenting their teen on their good character traits as they grow through this period. Comments such as, "Sue, I sure am proud of you taking the time to help your brother this morning." or "Dave, I remember when I used to remind you to take out the trash. It's great you have taken that responsibility upon yourself and it sure helps me."

It would be great if more parents would just grab their teen (AT HOME IN PRIVATE AND NOT IN FRONT OF FRIENDS!) and give them a big hug and say, "You're the greatest! I am so glad God gave us each other."

Let's give our children positive strokes and cheer them onward. Encourage them and show them they are worth more than all the gold in the world.

Your teen's #1 cheerleader should be YOU!

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A TEEN QUEST POWER SHEET

Parent/Teen Communication

Do You Verbally Attack Your Children ?

It is so easy to become angry with your teenage son or daughter. Their lack of cooperation or their newly executed "stupid mistake" can just put you over the edge. Parents say too much in a fit of rage. Often ridiculous things are verbalized that only serve to tear them down.

Rather than help your teen, do you verbally attack? When doing this, we move from a parental role to that of a critic.

Here are some infamous verbal lines parents say:

1. "It's not you that we don't trust, it's everybody else."
2. "Why don't you get a haircut?"
3. "When I was your age, I had to walk three miles up hill to school every day. . . with snow up to my waist."
4. "And how do you plan on paying for that?"
5. "Ask your mom," (when they do) "Ask your father."
6. "I have 30 more years of driving experience than you."

It is very important what we say as much as what we do. Let's be careful to think before we speak.

Non-Verbal “Put-Downs”

”A picture is worth a thousand words.”

May I say that your facial expressions given to your mate or y our children are worth more than 1,000 words.

Fault finding is not always verbal. A frown, a condemning gesture, a roll of the eyes, a sneering look all have to do with your disgust and displeasure.

I have been married to my wife for enough years that I can tell a lot by her facial expressions. Often I think I know what she is feeling, but I can really only guess.

When a parent scolds a child for not picking up his clothes, the child knows exactly how the parent feels. But when a parent shows a child “the silent treatment” the child can only guess what is wrong. Silence is the classic form of control and punishment in a dysfunctional home.

Any kind of verbal or non-verbal manipulation simply tells children, “You don’t measure up.” It teaches children to be critical and rebellious. They become unsure of themselves and develop a very low self-esteem.

Paul wrote, “Let us not more criticize and blame and pass judgment on one another, but rather decide and endeavor never to put a stumbling block or obstacle or a hindrance in the way of a brother.”

The job of a parent is to provide guidance, love, security; not to discourage. Be careful how you respond to your children. . . .even in a non-verbal manner.

Verbal “Put - Downs”

The old saying goes, “Sticks and stones may break your bones, but words will never hurt you.”

Is that really true? The long lasting effects of verbal abuse from parents can be devastating. Parents are the ones who children turn to for love, acceptance, and protection.

Have you been guilty of saying, “Son, you are so stupid; why don’t you ever think?” or “As you wash the car, just remember what a little creep you’ve been!” or “Why can’t you be good like your sister?” or maybe you have said, “You’re so dumb, can’t you ever make good grades like your brother?” or “I can’t believe you are flunking school; can’t you do anything right?”

In the book of James it says, “Out of the same mouth comes forth blessing and cursing. These things, my brethren, ought not to be so.”

When you say these things, it is like a poisonous dart piercing your child’s heart. This form of abuse is destroying your child’s value as a person.

May I suggest you realize your children are just children; yes, your teen still has a childlike mind. They need unconditional love. When they try to argue with you, do not get caught up in the argument or use sarcasm. Your child needs to know what you say is the final word, but that word must be given in kindness. A parent’s job is to not “get even” but to lead, guide, and provide a safe, secure environment.

Yes, it is important what is said. . . . In every situation. Verbal “put-downs” have no place in a Christian home.

Dismantling Your Verbal “Put Downs”

When a parent verbally or non-verbally attacks their child, the results can be harmful. Children who are verbally attacked develop into critical and rebellious teens.

Parents may say things such as, “Everything was peaceful until you came home”, or “Finally I can get a good night sleep; you’re going to be gone for the weekend.”

You may be so used to using “put-downs” that you don’t realize you’re doing it. You don’t realize the harm you are causing.

Here are some suggestions Norman Wright gives in his book, “*The Power of a Parent’s Words to Help Dismantle Put-Downs.*”

1. Realize there must be a change
2. Record your conversations at meal-times; forgetting the machine is running.
3. After listening to your taped conversations, focus on your communication patterns. For instance, how often do you use sarcasm, teasing, fault finding, blaming, and belittling in your communication with your children?
4. Find some scripture to help with your communication skills.
5. Have your spouse or a friend be your accountability partner.

Parents, you can dismantle your verbal and non-verbal “put-downs” if you pray and ask God to help you. After just a short time you will see your child’s behavior change for the better. Your relationship with your child will also grow stronger.