

10 Keys to Raising a Great Teenager

So what's so great about raising teenagers? Supposedly, all you get from them are blank stares and mumbles. They might not jump all over what you're offering now, but in the future, they will be grateful. To get you started, below are listed ten keys to raising great teens:

1. Under all the scowls and frowns, there's your child. As Dad, they need your attention and acknowledgement. Spend time doing things they enjoy, and support them in their hobbies. Take your teen to see their favorite team compete. Spend time getting to know your teenager. Teens need to feel they have a dad who is crazy about them.

2. Let your love show. Don't be alarmed when your child becomes a teenager – they're not monsters! All the love and affection they needed when they were younger, they still need now. Loving your kid means you need to find ways to express your love through your actions and words. Don't leave your teen wondering where you stand on them.

3. Reinforce their faith. Young people need the rock-solid guidance of their faith to help them navigate our amoral culture. Remind them that they are God's, and God is their's, and to always live accordingly.

4. Don't talk at your teens. With regards to correction, your teenagers don't always need lectures. There is a time for lectures, but when disciplining your teens, talk to them as adults. The end-goal is a two-way conversation.

5. Remember to listen. This statement ties in with the one above. When you listen to your teen, they feel empowered. They feel that they have a voice. Dads, that glazed look your teenager is giving you as you continue with your argument may

mean that he doesn't think you'll ever listen to him. Surprise him.

6. Reinforce a standard within teens. Children aren't born knowing what's right. As they get older, teens are placed under more and more pressure to abandon the standards and morals given to them in their younger years. As a dad, part of your responsibility is to remind them what they were taught in their younger years. Reward them when they do good things, and discipline them when they have overstepped the boundaries.

7. Get to know their friends. Even if you don't prefer some of your teens' friends, avoid saying how you don't like so and so. Even if they look suspicious, try asking your teenager what they like about that person. Teens want to choose their friends; they will look for friends that like what they like. Also, share with your teenager the characteristics you do like about their friends and get to know their friends' parents before you weigh in on the crowd your kids hang with.

8. Offer your wisdom. Being a dad, you automatically have a gift of wisdom because you lived just a bit longer than your teenagers. Though they may never admit that you were right or that they don't know everything, they do need your help, and more importantly they need your wisdom. You are a source of wisdom in their lives.

9. Help them stay focused. Translation: "Keep your teens looking ahead." Help them find a balance between enjoying the immediate and looking towards the future. It's easy to forget the consequences of current choices made now. Teach them the joy of delayed gratification. Everything isn't about the Friday night football games or Senior Prom.

10. Challenge them. The best way to wipe the bored look off your teenagers' face is to do something that takes them out of their comfort zone. Take them to a high ropes course and cheer them on, or complete the course with them. Go camping.

Whitewater rafting. Taking them out of their comfort zone will really increase their horizon and their bond with you.

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