

4 Ways to Deal With Your Daughter's Teen Dramatics

A long time ago I volunteered with an organization that worked with teenagers.

One day I was running errands when I passed a 16-year-old girl my wife and I had gotten the chance to know and love. We stopped our cars and talked for a minute. When I asked her how she was doing, she said that she wasn't doing well. She and a good friend were in a big fight.

I asked her what it was about and she admitted that it was something she had done. As I drove away, I thought about how stuff like that was always happening to her. If there was drama, she was usually right in the middle of it. I couldn't understand it. She came from a great family.

Years later, the help of a mentor gave her some insight into herself. She realized that she is drawn to drama, and if it didn't exist, she'd create it. Since then, she has learned how to manage that desire. Whether your daughter creates teen drama or it simply finds her, one thing is clear, it'll happen. When it does, how we respond and help her makes a huge difference.

Here are four points of action for when the drama begins:

Know Her

It's important to study her and understand what makes her tick. In the early years, you may be able to spot if she is someone who likes to be around drama or create it. Does she antagonize her siblings because she's bored? It could be a sign of things to come. The earlier you are able to figure her out how she operates, the better. Then you can discuss why she does what she does with her.

Listen Instead of Lecture

When she is consistently acting out, the easiest thing to turn to will be giving her a rundown of right and wrong. A reprimand of disappointment with her behavior, respect or the right way to treat people will shut down communication. During a lecture, your daughter may nod in agreement or even say, "Sorry", but inside she's on lockdown. It may even excite her to act out more. Start with asking questions. Listen and identify the clues that will lead you both to figure out what is driving the behavior.

Recognize and Understand the Pain

Many times the driving force in any drama is pain and insecurity. The goal should be to lead her to reveal that pain so you can offer it a tender and healing touch. Showing her you understand her hurt and validating her feelings will go a long way toward moving to more healthy behavior. Empathizing and providing comfort will make her more apt to listen to you.

Rationalize for Her

Finally, when you have gathered all of the information below the surface, give her a clear picture of what is happening. Explain what is causing her to do what she does. Then express your concerns for her and where her behavior will lead. Ask her and think through together better and more constructive ways to respond to her hurt and perhaps her natural tendency toward drama.

BJ Foster *is the content manager for All Pro Dad and a married father of two.*

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