

7 C's For Communicating With Teens

My wife, Susan, has always been really good at communicating with our five children, now ages 20-25. In fact, throughout the years, I've often sought her advice on how I should handle various situations with our kids.

So Susan has given me most of the material you'll now read below. I've compiled her wisdom into the 7 C's for communicating with teens.

1. Be Calm. When you approach a teen with a lot of emotion, such as anger, anxiety or enthusiasm, it can make a teen feel pressured to comply. That approach doesn't work because teens crave independence. They see themselves as older and capable and, as a result, they want to make more decisions for themselves. Instead, try approaching calmly and be open to discussion. This will take the pressure off the teen, and keep the conversation from escalating into opposition.

2. Be Confident. Teens can be very persuasive. And as their persuasive ability increases, you may lose your confidence and begin to doubt yourself. If your teen is persuasive and persistent, the confidence goes even more quickly as the teen wears you out! Stand firm and know when you are weakening. Enlist your spouse to pinch hit with you and interface with the teen for a while.

3. Be Clear. If you are making a request, make your request clear and have the details of the request firmly in your mind or, better yet, written out on paper. All children know how best to win over or distract their parents. Teens are children with a lot of years of experience. Do not let them distract you with other issues. Stick to the clear request you have outlined.

4. Be Compassionate Two other C's, Be Caring and Be Comforting, could also go under this heading. With all of the changes your teen is experiencing physically, mentally, and emotionally, it's really important to do your best to identify them in their feel what they feel ... and then comfort and care for them. Your teen is not looking for someone to lecture, but to listen to them. Ask them questions like, "So, how did that make you feel?" Or "That must have been so hard to go through that." Or "What can I do to help?" Then, be sure to listen. And always let them know that you love them no matter what and have their best interests at heart.

5. Be Consistent. As you communicate with your child, be sure that you are always consistent in what you are saying to them so there is no confusion from one conversation to the next. And be sure that you and your spouse are on the same page so that one of you is not conveying something completely different to your child on a particular matter. It's also absolutely critical that your child sees you, their parent, leading a consistent life where your walk matches your talk.

6. Be Courageous. When tackling tough topics with your teen, you'll need to be courageous and get out of your comfort zone. Courageously speak truth into your child's life on topics like sex and pornography. Before you do, you may want to check out [3 B's Every Parent Must Know When Talking to a Son about Pornography](#) and [10 Things You Should Know When Talking to Your Child about Sex](#).

7. Be Concise. Teens are very cryptic; think text messaging. Long, complicated speeches are exasperating to them, especially after listening to seven teachers for seven hours every school day. If you are asking them to do something, make your request clear, firm, and concise. Do not make it a big deal. If they agree to your request, acknowledge it positively. If they do not agree, do not engage. Just walk away calmly without saying another word. This sends a message to your child that you expect it to be done without further

conversation. Of course, if it's not done, you'll need to address it with them another time.

Which of these C's do you struggle with the most when communicating with your teen?

Mark Merrill is the president of Family First. For the original article, visit [.](#)