

Dealing With Teenage Rebellion God's Way

In 5 Reasons Why Your Teen is Rebelling, I shared with you underlying reasons your teen may be rebelling. Once you understand *why* they are rebelling, you'll have a clearer picture of *what* you can do about it.

So let's review different things teens struggle with, review why they struggle, and then answer the "Now what?" question.

1. Teens struggle for identity.

- **Why?** Teens are trying to answer the timeless question of, "Who am I?" as they grow into adults.
- **Now What?** Help your teen to understand that their image, how others see them, is not what's ultimately important. Their identity, who they are, is what matters. Tell your teen, and tell them often, that they are valuable because of who they are not because of what they do. They are valuable because they are a child created by God ... your child. My How to Validate Your Child's Identity blog will provide you with more ideas.

2. Teens struggle for acceptance.

- **Why?** Teens want to feel like they fit in somewhere ... that they belong.
- **Now What?** Be sure your child knows that it's a normal desire to want to fit in. But also share with them that it's good to be different too. Standing up and standing out as a young man or woman, especially when it's for the right thing, is what leadership is all about. Also, make sure they feel accepted by the most influential person in their life—you!

3. Teens struggle for attention.

- **Why?** A lot of teens desire to have people pay attention to them and they'll do what they think they need to do to get noticed.
- **Now What?** Notice your child. Catch them doing something good and praise them for it. Encourage your teen every opportunity you get. And, as I talked about in my blog, *How to Be Available for Parenting Teenagers*, it's important to intentionally set aside time and just be available when your teen needs you or wants to talk.

4. Teens struggle for control.

- **Why?** Many teens want to make their own rules as they grow older, which oftentimes means they are not afraid to break yours.
- **Now What?** You must learn *How to Be an Out of Control Parent*. That means, as your child grows in age, takes on more responsibility, and earns your trust, more decision-making and control should be given to them. In other words, as I said in *Creating Boundaries for Your Kids*, their "playing court" should be increased.

5. Teens struggle for freedom.

- **Why?** More freedom is what most teens *think* they want.
- **Now What?** First, be clear with your child that you love them and always have their best interests at heart—which is the reason you have certain parameters for them. Remember *How to Stay Joined at the Hip and Heart with Your Teen* when addressing this issue of freedom. Second, your teen needs to understand that with freedom comes responsibility. So have your teen write down the freedoms they want and the responsibilities they think go along with those freedoms.

For example, if they say something like, "I just want to be on my own and do what I want," you can say, "Well, I love you and really want you to stay here, but if you want that kind of freedom, then come up with a plan for how you're going to

live. Your plan should include things like where you want to live, how you are going to pay for it, and all of your other living expenses and transportation. It might also include things like who's going to take care of you when you're sick, who's going to cook your meals, do your laundry, and hold you when you cry."

They'll probably quickly realize that they can only handle a smaller amount of freedom and responsibility while they are still teenagers.

What are some other ways you have handled a rebelling teenager?

***Mark Merrill** is the president of Family First. For the original article, visit .*