

How to Teach Your Teen to Make Good Decisions

What do you do when your teen asks to go to a party? Sure, you can respond with a “yes, you can go” or “no, you can’t go.”

But there’s a better way. That better way is to ask them good questions that cause them to think critically and lead them to their own answer and, hopefully, the right choice. Although it’s not a guarantee that they’ll make the right choice, these questions will help them think things through with you and make the wise decision the next time.

When our kids become teens, sometimes we need to let them make their own decisions hoping they will choose well but giving them freedom to fail and learn from their mistakes. Of course, we don’t want to allow them to make a decision that could cause irreparable harm or have irreversible consequences.

Here are 3 types of questions to ask your teen when they want to do something you don’t want them to do:

1. Informational Questions: These questions help lay out the facts for them and for you.

- Where are you going?
- Who will be there?
- Will their parents be there?
- What will be happening there?
- When will you be home? No later than curfew, right?

2. If-Then Questions: These questions help them go beyond the facts, thinking through different scenarios, and form a bit of a game plan should something bad happen.

- If someone brings alcohol or drugs, then what are you going to do?
- If your friends want to do something immoral or illegal,

then how will you handle it?

3. Consequence Questions: These questions help them decide if the possible consequences are worth the risk.

- If you're tagged in an Instagram or Facebook picture, will you regret being there?
- If the police come, is this party worth getting arrested for?

What are some other questions you have asked your teen that have helped them understand, or even agree with, your conclusions about attending a questionable party or event? Please share your comments.

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