

Must-Have Qualities for Building Trust With Your Kids

One of the most important things in parenting through the teen years is developing trust in relationships with your kids.

When it comes to our teens, trust is how you'll gather the knowledge required to meet the needs of your teens. I know many parents who snoop through diaries, obsessively check online activities and spy on their kids in various ways. We parents have all been detectives at some point. However, when you go behind their back and they find out, you will lose their trust.

In dealing with my daughters who are now 18 and 15, I've placed a high priority on them feeling comfortable in coming to me with anything. That is a lot easier to write than it is to implement. It requires a great deal of personal restraint, fighting through parental fears, and placing my faith in both of them that they have been taught correctly and will act accordingly. What has been my strategy? Here are five strategies to build trust with your teen.

Model the Expected Behavior

When my eldest became a teen, I underwent a major lifestyle transformation. I understood that she was watching my every step, and I needed to change some of my behavior. We have to ask, "What am I modeling to my child?" If it's anything but the behavioral standards we are holding them to, there will be problems. Be the person you desire them to become.

Eat Together

This is the easiest way to build trust. Yet, in so many families it's gone by the wayside. If you want your children to open up without you having to snoop, the dinner table is

where it will happen. There is just something about eating together that breeds openness and comfort. Make family mealtime as regular an occurrence as possible.

Honest Communication

Once at the table, or anywhere, make sure that the conversation is always rooted in honesty. A great way to do this is to tell them stories of your past. My daughters love hearing how Dad made far worse mistakes than they have. It bonds us. When I describe where I went wrong, it automatically raises the bar of their own standards for themselves.

Consistency

I tell my daughters I will be where I say I will be. I want them to understand I'm consistent. They can trust my promises. Do this in every aspect of your life. If you say you'll be at the game, be at the game. If you say it's Daddy/Daughter night this weekend, do it. Be consistent with your praise and the same with your discipline.

Instill Quality Standards

Put in the work now that will show up later. If you do this—it requires focused effort—you will be able to extend trust to your teen because you'll be confident in what the output will be.

Question: How do you establish trust with your teenager? Let us know in the comments section below! {eo}

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