

Reasons Your Teen May Be Rebellious

Teenage rebellion is nothing new. Rebellious children have been around since the first children inhabited the earth. Remember Cain and Abel?

So, what should you do about it? Run from the battle? Raise the white surrender flag in defeat? Go to war with guns blazing? None of those things will accomplish very much and may end up killing your relationship with your child.

Instead, it's important to first get a handle on why your teen may be rebelling. Understanding why your teen is rebelling is essential to understanding what we should do about it.

Here are five reasons why your teen may be rebelling:

1. Struggle for identity. Your teen is trying to answer the question, "Who am I?" During the teen years, our children struggle to figure out who they really are and why they are here. It's important during this time for parents to help children understand their immeasurable value because of who they are, not for what they do. Moms and dads should help their kids understand the difference between identity and image.

2. Struggle for acceptance. Remember trying to be cool in order to fit in? It's the same today. Teens still want to be part of the crowd, they want a sense of belonging, and they still feel the pressure to do what everyone else is doing. In the movie *What a Girl Wants*, teenage Daphne is trying to be someone she's not and is really struggling with it. At one point, her boyfriend asks, "Why are you trying so hard to fit in, when you were born to stand out?" While understanding our children's need for acceptance, let's help them understand that it's good to be different. Encourage them to be

different, to have the courage to do what's right and the conviction to stand out in the crowd.

3. Struggle for attention. Teens often want others to notice them. They're silently saying, "Hey, look at me!" And sometimes they'll do almost anything for attention. As parents, we need to do everything we can to give our kids attention by being available when they need us. A father or mother who is always working and not paying attention to their child will find a child who seeks attention in many wrong places and many wrong ways. Fathers, especially, need to let their daughters know they are beautiful inside and out. And they need to let their sons know they've got what it takes.

4. Struggle for control. When our children are younger, we are in complete control of just about everything they do—what they eat, what they wear, where they go and who they are with. As they get older, our children want to make more and more decisions for themselves and don't want Mom or Dad always telling them what to do. We need to show our children they will have more control over their decision-making to the extent that we can trust them to make wise decisions. Trust is earned over time.

5. Struggle for freedom. If you have teens, you've probably heard something like, "I just want some freedom." Although teens say they want total freedom and independence, they still want to and need to rely on us for certain things. As parents, we need to allow them to experience more freedom as they get older, but only as they learn a very important point: Freedom comes with responsibility. {eo}

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