

Why You Need to Set Boundaries for Dating

Navigating the dating waters can be extremely confusing, and at times, frustrating. Everyone has their own idea about what you should do – your parents, friends, and the guys who like you. It can be hard to decipher the boy code at this age, since boys aren't usually mature enough to tell a girl he likes her. Usually, he tells his friend to ask you out, or he just teases you. In the classic movie, *Anne of Green Gables*, Gilbert Blythe pulls his love interest's (Anne Shirley) hair and dips her braid into an inkwell.

Boys usually don't tease you unless they like you. However, if they are cruel, then they probably are just mean guys. It doesn't get any better when you get older! Even though the guys will have matured *a little* by high school graduation, they still fall into the same category.

And when you're it. Husbands love to tease their wives. It never ends. So how do you maneuver this confusing time? Does he like me? Does he not like me? Better than picking petals off of daisies is a little guide to understanding the hormonal mind of teenage boys.

What rules do your parents have? Are you allowed to date? Do you have to be a certain age? Do you have to go on group dates? What does hooking up mean? Is courting something that people still do? How do I tell a guy that I like that I'm not allowed to date? It's so embarrassing.

1. What does the Bible say?

Specifically about dating—unfortunately, not much. Societal customs were extremely different back then, with girls being married pretty soon after they were able to have babies. Life spans were shorter, and it was extremely important to have as

many children as possible. They didn't waste any time!

2. Find out your parents' rules.

Sit down and have a conversation with your parents, *if you haven't already*, and find out their thoughts on your dating life. Even if you don't agree with what they say, stay calm, and remember that your parents love you and want what's best for you. This isn't the time to get into a drag-out fight.

Be prepared when you talk to them, and be upfront with your request. If you think you should be able to date at 15, give them some reasons why. Share your boundaries with them. If nothing else, you've set the stage for future conversations, given your parents something to think about, and you can revisit the conversation again in the future.

Even if you've already talked to your parents about dating, why not sit down with them and open the floor for any questions or concerns they have. Yes, it might be extremely awkward, but this is a mature and adult way to keep the lines of communication open. Your parents are just as uncomfortable sometimes in regards to your dating life, so give them a break and broach the subject yourself.

You never know, you might be surprised with their answers!

3. Set your own boundaries and guidelines.

If you're gonna share with your parents your boundaries and guidelines, you should probably know what they are. Make a written your boundaries in the area of physical affection, what kind of dates you want to go on, what curfew you think is reasonable, the character traits a guy has to demonstrate *before* you agree to go on a date, etc.

Group dates or one-on-ones? Who drives? School nights or weekends?

Make your boundaries strict, but realistic. If you're in

middle school, an eleven o'clock curfew probably won't fly, but maybe 8 o'clock on school nights and 10 o'clock on the weekends. At least having these things in writing gives you a starting place for negotiations. And nothing good happens after midnight. Remember that. J

I'm thrilled to be part of your dating life, and I hope you'll give me the chance to get to know you, too. Please ask any questions, and good luck with the talk with your parents!

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