

Ten Top Tips



When talking with your teenager

What happened to the kid who always wanted to talk? Are you having trouble talking to your teenager? Here are ten tips that might help!

1. **Show interest** in what's happening in your teenagers' lives. Ask them to tell you about what they are doing and leave it to them to choose what they will talk to you about.
2. **Demonstrate respect** toward your teenager. Accept the times they don't feel like talking.
3. **Learn to listen** and not do all the talking. Taking over the conversation means you're missing out on hearing about your teenager's world.
4. **Avoid lecturing and ordering**. Your teenager won't feel heard and you'll close down the conversation, when you probably want to open it up.
5. **If teenagers feel judged or belittled**, they will not come to you when they need to talk and you will feel closed off from their world.
6. **Avoid giving mixed messages**. Be clear, open and honest with your teenager.
7. **Choose a place and time** where you can talk with your teenager about important issues where you won't be distracted.
8. **Offer your opinions** and share your experiences, but avoid presenting your way as the only way. Teenagers are learning to think for themselves and are able to make some decisions for themselves.
9. **Try to not only focus** on your teenager in conversations. Talk about a broad range of topics. Share your experiences as a teenager. The more human you appear, the easier it will be for your teenager to talk to you.
10. **Teenagers are often critical** of their parents in their attempts to separate themselves and move toward adulthood. Try not to be defensive. Instead, acknowledge your differences. This can open up conversations on values and beliefs, rather than end in a battle of wills.

