

LOVE NOTES: *Restoring the harmony in your relationship with your teenager.*

“The youth now love luxury; they have bad manners, contempt for authority; they show disrespect for elders and love chatter in place of exercise. They no longer rise when elders enter the room. They contradict their parents, chatter before company, gobble up (their food) . . . and tyrannize their teachers.”

Believe it or not, this is a quote from Socrates. Apparently frustration with the next generation isn't new. Today we're going to focus on how to navigate through adolescence with our teenagers.

1. State your expectations and then stop talking. Your teenager will argue with you until the cows come home or until it's clear you're done talking. Then he or she has to decide, “Am I going to obey my parents' rules or not?” If you get into a shouting match, the teenager focuses on the argument and their feelings about that rather than on whether he or she is going to obey. Quite honestly, you'll leave the argument and not know what your teenager will decide to do regarding the issue. But you've increased the odds that he or she will have listened to you rather than tune you out.
2. Be clear and consistent about consequences. All ages of children need to know the consequences of misbehavior and that those consequences will be upheld. Even if you haven't been consistent in the past, it's never too late to start. Parenting expert, Jane Nelsen, says to make sure the consequences meet the three R's: related to the misbehavior, respectful of the adult and child, and reasonable so that the child is motivated to get back into good graces (grounding for a month is unreasonable).
3. Surround yourself with a support network of other adults your children have come to know and love. If your family is friends with other families, ask those adults to talk with your child. Your children will hear the same message but it will be coming from a different messenger and that can make all the difference. You as a parent will also benefit from the extra encouragement of supportive friends at this time.
4. Listen to your teenager. This is the number one complaint of teenagers. Listening is not the same as agreeing, but it is a way to show your child respect and a very necessary skill for being in relationship. When your child is a teenager it is more challenging to find times to listen but don't let their aloofness or rudeness fool you into thinking they don't need you at this stage of their life. Use time in the car, schedule one-on-ones at a local coffee shop, or engage in a favorite shared activity to open up opportunities for talking and listening.

When encountering the challenges of a relationship with your adolescent, remember to state your expectations, stop arguing, be consistent with consequences, surround yourself and your teenager with support, and listen, listen, listen. For more help with your teenage children read, [Get Out of My Life, But First Will You Take Cheryl and Me to the Mall](#) by Anthony Wolf or [Why Do They Act That Way](#) by David Walsh.