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Impair Healthy Healing In People Over The Age Of 30!

100 Ways to Connect With Your Teen

By Dr. Debra Hapenny Ciavola

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100 Ways to Connect with your Teens

- 1.View adolescence as an adventure.
- 2.Respect their privacy.
- 3.Create family times around activities they enjoy.
- 4.Keep the delicate balance between holding on and letting go.
- 5.Understand the nature of the adolescent beast.
- 6.Take advantage of an unexpected connection.
- 7.Bite your tongue.
- 8.Don't take their chaotic behavior or mood swings personally.
- 9.Help them discover their spirituality.
- 10.Catch them doing something right and praise them.
- 11.Influence your teens' decision making, but don't say "I forbid."
- 12.Give privileges with age and responsibility.
- 13.Be their mentor and ally.
- 14.Guide them, not manage them.
- 15.Be clear about expectations and the consequences for not meeting those expectations.
- 16.Be your teen's advocate.
- 17.Show true interest in their activities.
- 18.Expect miracles.
- 19.Be their parent. Teens do want rules, limits, and questions from you.
- 20.If you can't police, monitor or enforce a rule, don't have it.
- 21.Watch the little rules that poison relationships.
- 22.Spend time alone with your teen.
- 23.Ask open ended question, such as "What are you learning in your history class?"
- 24.Encourage them to talk it out.
- 25.Actively supervise your teen's exposure to media violence.
- 26.Acknowledge your teen's fears, even if you do not agree with them.
- 27.Control your own behavior.

100 Ways to Connect With Your Teen

28. Talk about gangs and cliques.
29. Allow them safe and healthy outlets for their energy.
30. Use "I" statements rather than "You".
31. Enforce the important stuff, not the little stuff.
32. Seek to understand what your teen is really saying rather than reacting.
33. Share something personal that relates to your years as a teen.
34. Avoid giving unwanted advice.
35. Discuss personal matters on sex and fears.
36. Give your teen the impression that you trust them to do what is right.
37. Listen patiently to your teen's reasons for wanting to do something.
38. Connect with your teen. Reflect on your adolescence.
39. Avoid lecturing.

40. Be someone they can believe in.
41. Make your home a place where teens want to hang out.
42. Talk less about the media and more about real heroes in our country.
43. Make a list of ten things you like about your teen and tell them.
44. Teach them how to be compassionate, empathetic, and fair.
45. Show compassion to other teenagers.
46. Keep your face relaxed when they are telling you something you don't want to hear.
47. Talk about drinking and its consequences. Make your expectations known.
48. Help them establish their own autonomy while maintaining a loving relationship with you.
49. Support your teen's interests and encourage in their accomplishments.
50. Have regular family meetings in which the whole family talks things over and makes decisions together.
51. Ask what worries them most about their future.
52. Use natural and logical consequences, so discipline makes sense.
53. When they come home from an event ask, "How did you show good character?"
54. Teach respect for life in all forms.
55. Ask if they would like to go out to eat, run an errand, or go shopping with you.
56. Show up to watch them in their activities. Clap loudly.
57. Talk to their friends, learn their names, and let them confide in you.
58. Work together in community activities.
59. Learn more about their world.
60. Believe they can make a difference and be a success.
61. Admit when you are wrong. Be able to say, "I'm sorry."
62. Hug them often.
63. Say, "I love you. I'm proud of you."
64. Show your teen respect.
65. Eat dinner together four to five days a week.
66. Never berate or belittle teens in front of their friends or peers.
67. Ask their opinions.
68. Give them room to breathe to balance independence with dependence.
69. Set standards in clothing while still allowing them to express themselves.
70. Talk to your teen when there is not a problem.

100 Ways to Connect With Your Teen

71. Listen carefully to what is being said as well as what is not.
72. Have daily conversations.
73. Share your concerns rather than being the undercover cop.
74. Keep the discussions with your teen confidential unless they are involved with something dangerous.
75. Follow through on promises.
76. Allow your teen to take responsibility when you see them handling it well.
77. Forgive your teen when they make a mistake.
78. Negotiate new challenges.
79. Give your teen increasing autonomy (even if it kills you).
80. Accept all of your teen's feelings as long as they are respectfully conveyed.
81. Schedule times to talk about unappealing topics. Do not catch on the fly.
82. Focus on what your teen did right before offering constructive criticism.
83. Make more statements rather than asking questions.
84. Talk to your teenager rather than at them.
85. Don't over-react.
86. Accept they will have moody behavior and teach them how to deal with it.

87. Allow them to make decisions about their own lives whenever possible.
88. Remember you are in the process of "people-making."
89. Express words of appreciation.
90. Listen with your heart.
91. Help them develop a sense of humor by telling funny stories of your day.
92. Enforce mutually acceptable behavior standards.
93. Listen to the whole story before you react.
94. Use natural and logical consequences when a boundary is broken.
95. Cook together or teach them how to cook.
96. Wait up until they come home.
97. Talk in the dark after the house is quiet and they are tired and relaxed.
98. Find out if they want you to fix it or just listen before you give advice.
99. Discover a shared passion together.
100. Remember, children become who you predict them to be.

Dr. Debra Hapenny Ciavola is a Licensed Marriage & Family Therapist working with children, adolescents, and adults. The author of *50 Great Tips, Tricks, and Techniques to Connect with Your Teen*, she can be reached at DrDebbie@greatparentingtips.com.

Quality Time with your Teen

By Rachel Paxton

It's sometimes difficult to find ways to be involved with your teen without totally intruding in his/her life. You want to talk to them, they don't want to talk to you (most of the time anyway). I've found the best way to connect with my teenage daughter is to enter her world and do the things she likes to do.

100 Ways to Connect With Your Teen

There's a saying that if you want to understand your child's world you have to play with them, no matter how old they are.

You don't always have to be even directly interacting with your teen in order to be involved in their world. Just being around the same influences they are, and taking an interest in their activities, lets them know that you care and that you understand what they deal with from day to day. Then later, at home, you can talk about the things you have experienced together. It's a great way to connect. Here are some ways my teenage daughter and I have spent time together:

My daughter was involved in a music group that did a lot of fundraising that required a lot of involvement by the parents. At first I was really resistant to the time involved, but I soon realized how much fun it was to hang out with my daughter and the other teens and their parents.

School activities are another great way to be involved in your child's life, at any age. When they're younger there's field trips, class parties, etc., you can be involved with, but when they get older there are activities like school plays that parents are a very important part of. I've helped sell tickets, worked at the bake sale...where I didn't even spend time with my daughter at all, but it meant a lot to her that I was there supporting her.

Attending sporting events is also important to your child. When they get older it seems like they don't really care if you're there or not, but it is important to them even if they don't say so. It makes them feel like you care about what they do.

Helping my daughter with school projects has been a great way for us to spend time together. She gets to do the hard part of doing all the research and writing, and then I do the fun part of helping her put it all together in the end. Even with older teens, most of them don't particularly enjoy doing all this work by themselves, even if you know they're completely capable of it. I don't do the work for her, just help her by giving her feedback on her ideas and giving her a hand. Often beforehand even I will go to the library with her and help her sort through reference materials. I know it means a lot to her, especially when she's doing a huge project and is completely overwhelmed.

Another way I've been involved with my daughter is to be a youth leader in her church youth group. Again, I am not actually spending time with her there most of the time, but I am experiencing the same things she's experiencing and it's giving us something in common that we can both relate to and discuss. Those times together have been very meaningful.

As you can see, not all of these activities involve me actually talking to and hanging out with my daughter. You know as well as I do that our teens don't always want us hanging around them. I'm

happy for the time I do get to spend with my daughter, for the little time I have left with her. When we have things in common my daughter is much more likely to talk to me and share her feelings with me. When I don't know what she experiences, it is very hard for me to relate what she is going through. These shared experiences have opened up many more opportunities for us to share and connect that we wouldn't otherwise have.

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Rachel Paxton is a freelance writer and mom who is the author of *What's for Dinner?*, an e-cookbook containing more than 250 quick easy dinner ideas. For more recipes, organizing tips, home decorating, crafts, holiday hints, and more, visit [Creative Homemaking](#) at

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