

12 Things Your Teen Needs From You – Their Mindful Parent



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What does your teen need from you right now? Being the parent of a teen can be very challenging on one hand and so amazing and wonderful on the other. Teens are seeking independence but still need to know parents are there when they need them to encourage, support and guide them.

As a parent of a teen it is important to be mindful of ways to connect with your teen and to make sure they get what they need from you. Here are 12 things you – a mindful parent - can give your teen.



1) Your Full Attention: Stop what you are doing and be totally present with your teen. This means really listening to them even when it's not convenient for you. It means talking to them, asking their opinion, learning about their dreams. It also means putting down your phone, tablet, computer, and turning off the TV when they are around. Practice being [mindful](#) around them.

Practice focusing your complete, undivided attention on your teen – not just when they need to be scolded. Learn to be fully present when they are with you. Look them in the eye. Smile at them. Give them your undivided attention. Let them know you think they are terrific. Show them your unconditional love and acceptance.

They will thrive and grow in the glow of your attention. And you will get to know them better and develop a closer, healthier relationship. What they learn from this relationship with you will spill over into all their relationships.

2) Ask “What does my teen need from me right now?” At each stage of your teen's life and in every moment to moment situation it is important to understand what they need from you. Ask yourself: What are the life- lessons my teen needs to learn? Do they need me to just listen? Do they need my guidance or support? Do they need me to set limits



for them? Would some encouragement be helpful right now? How can I best support their growth, self-confidence, and ability to have healthy relationships?

3) Try to see the world from your teen's point of view. It helps to remember how you felt when you were their age. Put yourself in their shoes. What stressors do they have that you never had to deal with? How would you feel if you were them?

4) Learn to accept your teen exactly the way they are. Teens struggle with self-esteem and feeling good enough. Be aware that teens commonly feel criticized by parents when parents are trying to make suggestions or guide them. Love them unconditionally. Let them know you love them no matter what. Look past their difficult behavior to the beautiful being underneath. They are already perfect.

5) Understand what your teen is feeling. Teens often have intense emotions. Ask them how they feel if they don't tell you. Help them understand how they feel and why they feel that way. Validate their feelings. Show them you "get them". Help them [manage their emotions and find thoughts that feel better](#).



6) Guidance: Teens waver between wanting total independence and needing your guidance. It is your job to teach them right from wrong, appropriate behavior, a positive work ethic, personal responsibility, how to be a productive member of society. Listen and make suggestions. Help them consider the options and make good choices.

Besides telling them, you must show them what you want them to do with your own actions and behavior. Teens learn from what they see you do. You cannot expect them to know everything yet. They are always learning from you. If you don't want them to swear, then don't swear yourself. If you want them to be good at problem solving with a positive attitude, teach them by your example.

Teens develop their own values and beliefs about the world from, guess who? Yes, you. Take the task of guiding them thoughtfully and seriously. You are their parent. You are in charge of teaching them many important things that no one else can teach them.

7) Limit Setting: Teens learn from the limits you set for them. Be very clear about what they can and cannot do. Make sure they know the rules and understand what you expect from them. They feel more secure when you do. Write down your expectations and make sure they understand them. Give them rewards when they do the right thing and appropriate consequences when they do not. Be consistent.



When correction is required, do it out of love and awareness of what your teen needs from you right now. Be clear, firm, and kind. Refuse to talk to them when they are having an angry melt-down. Tell them you will talk with them after they calm themselves down.

Avoid the trap of constantly telling your teen what to do or how to do it. Let them learn by doing. Teens usually feel criticized even when the best intentioned parent tells them to do it a different way.

8) Respect: If you want your teen to respect you and others, you must always be respectful to them. Talk to them in a reasonable tone of voice. Follow the golden rule: treat them like you would like to be treated. Be careful not to interrupt them when they are having an important conversation with a friend or in the middle of a TV show (unless they have ignored their own agreement about when to turn off the TV or hang up the phone.) Let them know you need their attention and be respectful of their need to finish what they are doing. Learn to value their opinion even when it differs from yours.

9) Lessons: Make sure you allow your teen to learn their own lessons. Avoid rescuing them from the consequences of their behavior. Let them learn from their mistakes. For example, if they routinely forget their gym clothes, resist taking them into school for them. They will learn to remember faster if you let them go without and suffer the consequences of not being prepared for class. It's great to be kind and help them out, but don't prevent them from learning how their behavior impacts their life.

10) Modeling: Your teen's relationship with you is the model for all their relationships. When you have a healthy parent/teen relationship, your teen will feel secure, loved, good enough, confident, and important. Make sure you behave the way you would like your teen to learn to behave. If you scream and yell at them in frustration, that is what they will learn to do. Tell them how you are feeling about their behavior, set firm limits, set clear expectations, and show them your love no matter what. They will learn to do the same.

11) Fun: Have fun with your teen. Doing fun activities with your teen gives you an opportunity to connect with each other. Shared experiences build your relationship and create memories. You can expand you teen's horizons by exposing them to museums, culture, music, art, sports, and nature. You get the idea!

12) Take care of yourself so you can be in the best condition to be a [mindful](#) parent. Get enough sleep. Rest when you are tired. Take a break. Ask for help when you need it. Eat a healthy diet. Get some exercise. Have fun. Practice mindfulness regularly. Allow yourself to be still. Be silent.



Not only will you be more available to be a better parent to your teen but you will be modeling behavior they need to learn to take care of themselves.