



For Parents

1. **Don't lecture your teen, have a conversation.** When parents complain "my teenager doesn't want to talk to me," what they're really complaining about is "my teenager doesn't want to listen to me." Conversation involves at least *two* people.
2. **Don't attack.** The conversation between any two people will break down if one of the two is put on the defensive and made to feel he's being accused of something.
3. **Show respect for your teen's opinions.** Teenagers can be surprisingly easy to talk with if parents make it clear that they're listening to the teen's point of view.
4. **Keep it short and simple.** Remember the "50% rule": Almost every parent says at least 50% more than he or she should. Remember when you were a teen and your parents lectured at you? And you thought, "Will you please stop; I already got the point!" Stop before your teen gets there.
5. **Be yourself.** Don't try to talk like your kids or their friends.
6. **Seize the moment.** A spontaneous conversation in the car or at home late at night -- any time when you're not rushed -- can make for some of the warmest, most rewarding moments,

For Teenagers

1. **Try to understand the situation from your parents' point of view.** If your goal is to be allowed to stay out later on Saturday night, for example, try to anticipate what they are concerned about, such as your safety and your whereabouts.
2. **Address their concerns honestly and directly.** Try saying something like, "If I am allowed to stay out later, I will tell you in advance where I'm going to be so you know how to reach me," or "I'll call you to let you know what time I'm going to be home, and that way you won't have to worry about it."
3. **Don't go on the defensive.** If you feel deeply about the subject of the conversation -- clothes, friends, politics, sex, drugs, whatever -- stick to your guns, but listen to what your parents have to say.
4. **Don't criticize or ridicule their viewpoints.** Show them and their opinions the respect you want them to give you.
5. **Make requests.** Don't issue a list of demands.
6. **Make "I" statements.** Explain your concerns by saying things such as "I feel you're not being fair." Or, "I feel like you're not listening to my side." Avoid "you" statements, such as "You don't know what you're talking about."