

HOW TO HANDLE CONFLICT WITH YOUR TEEN 6 GOLDEN RULES

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IN THEIR TEENS, YOUNG PEOPLE OFTEN SEEK MORE FREEDOM AND AUTONOMY AND CAN TURN AGAINST THEIR PARENTS' RULES. HERE ARE A FEW TIPS TO RESOLVE PARENT-TEEN CONFLICTS EFFECTIVELY WHILE MAINTAINING THE QUALITY OF YOUR RELATIONSHIP.

1 CHOOSE THE RIGHT TIME

It's not always easy to **know how to talk to a teenager**. Firstly, avoid acting "in the heat of the moment" and wait until you're both calm and in control of your emotions before approaching delicate subjects. Otherwise, the conversation could quickly turn sour.

2 DEPERSONALIZE THE PROBLEM

To open the discussion, state clearly and objectively what you think the problem is by trying to separate it from the people involved.

For example, use the following wording:

"I don't think we have the same opinion on..."
"Lately it's been difficult at mealtimes..."
"I often have to tell you to put your clothes away."

Avoid criticism and wording that attributes blame, such as:

"You never listen to me..."
"I've had enough of..."
"I feel hurt when you don't eat the meals I've made for you!"

3 RESPECT EVERYONE'S OPINIONS AND FEELINGS

Focus on the **CONTENT** of what they're saying (what they are expressing) without paying too much attention to the container (their attitude and the words that they use).

At all costs, avoid interrupting them with phrases such as:

"Yes, but you need to understand that..."
Listen to understand, not to respond!

Validate their point of view and welcome their feelings:

"Yeah, I understand that it must be difficult for you..."
"I know that you don't agree with my decision, and that's OK."
"I totally understand that you're angry with me."

Don't fake empathy, BE empathetic

4 EXPRESS YOUR POINT OF VIEW

Express your point of view. When your teen has finished, express your view of things while avoiding attacking or blaming. Don't be the victim or the attacker.

Be authentic and clearly express your opinion, fears and feelings:

"You see, I see things differently. In my opinion, ..."
"In the situation I felt..."
"The reason we have this rule is because, for me, I think it's important to teach you that..."
"I might be wrong to not let you take part in this activity, but I'm worried that..."

Be sure that your teen understands (sometimes they twist our words) and ask if they have anything to add.

5 LOOK FOR SOLUTIONS

Look for solutions to the problem TOGETHER and try to agree on a way of doing things:

"What do you suggest we do to resolve this situation?"
"What would you need for situation X to be better in the future?"
"What compromise can we reach?"
"This is my suggestion... what do you think?"

A parent-teen relationship centred around listening and collaboration.

The more teens feel listened to, the more likely they are to cooperate. And the more involved they feel in finding a solution, they more likely they are to stick to it. It's also very empowering and it creates a climate of collaboration instead of a dictatorship.

6 END ON A HIGH NOTE

Thank your teen for listening and working together. Don't drag out the conversation. Move on to something else, because teenagers HATE never-ending lectures. If possible, end the conversation on a humorous note or with a big hug.

