

CHECKLIST: 10 PROVEN WAYS TO GET YOUR TEENAGER TO LISTEN TO YOU

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1. USE "I" MESSAGES INSTEAD OF "YOU" MESSAGES

"You" messages focus on what the other person has done or should do. "I" messages focus on how the person who is speaking feels.

Here are a couple of examples:

- "You" message: You should stop using your phone so much.
- "I" message: I feel concerned when I see you using your phone when you still have several homework assignments to complete.

- "You" message: You're so rude.
- "I" message: I feel disrespected when you speak to me that way.

2. USE ACTIVE LISTENING TECHNIQUES

Use the following techniques:

- Pay full attention to what your teenager is saying
- Maintain eye contact
- Encourage him to continue speaking by saying things like "Tell me more..." or "Go on..."
- Nod once in a while
- Occasionally paraphrase what he has been saying, e.g. "It sounds like you feel left out because you can't play this game with your friends. It sounds like you think our house rules are too strict."
- Ask clarifying questions when necessary, e.g. "Can you explain why you feel that way?"
- Don't interrupt him when he's talking

3. AVOID THESE BARRIERS TO COMMUNICATION...

- Interrogating, e.g. "Where are you now? Why didn't you tell me you were going to be late? Which friends are you with?"
- Lecturing, e.g. "You should learn to manage your emotions better."
- Criticising, e.g. "You're so lazy."
- Blaming, e.g. "If you could just wake up on time, you wouldn't cause so much stress for everyone else."
- Commanding, e.g. "Clear your room right now."
- Ridiculing, e.g. "There's no way you could accomplish that given your current work ethic."
- Giving solutions, e.g. "If you do more practice questions, you'll get better grades for math."

4. ACKNOWLEDGE YOUR TEENAGER'S FEELINGS

The teenagers I work with often tell me that their parents are dismissive of them. Their parents tell them why they shouldn't have certain beliefs or feelings.

As such, these teenagers feel as if their parents treat them as kids, when they're actually on the cusp of adulthood. Show respect toward your teenager and acknowledge her thoughts and feelings.

5. FOCUS ON YOUR TEENAGER'S SPECIFIC BEHAVIOUR

Don't make general statements such as:

- "You don't manage your time well."
- "Why do you always bully your brother?"
- "You never submit your homework on time."
- "You're so rude to your grandmother."

Focus on the facts instead, for example:

- "I noticed that you were using your phone for four hours straight this afternoon."
- "Last night, I saw you slap your brother."
- "This month, I've received three separate emails from your teachers telling me that you haven't submitted the assigned homework."
- "Yesterday, I heard you raise your voice at your grandmother when she asked you if you had showered."

6. AVOID USING THE PHRASES "YOU ALWAYS..." AND "YOU NEVER..."

This is a follow-up to the previous point.

It's rarely 100% true that your teenager "always" or "never" does something, so using these phrases will cause him to become defensive.

7. DO YOUR BEST TO UNDERSTAND THINGS FROM YOUR TEENAGER'S PERSPECTIVE

Think back to when you were a teenager. Did you like it when your parents cut you off while you were speaking? Or when you were playing with your friends, did you like it when your parents interrupted you?

Take some time to analyse the situation from your teenager's point of view.

8. DON'T THREATEN YOUR TEENAGER

It's tempting to threaten your teenager, especially when you're at your wits' end.

Resist this urge, because making threats will damage your parent-child relationship in the long run. The threats will eventually lose their effectiveness too.

9. AS FAR AS POSSIBLE, GIVE YOUR TEENAGER CHOICES

By doing so, you'll give your teenager a sense of control and autonomy.

Here are some types of choices you could give your teenager:

- Do the task today or tomorrow
- Do the task every day for 10 minutes, or once a week for an hour
- Do the task using Method A, B, or C
- Do Task A this week or Task B next week

10. SHOW EMPATHY TOWARD YOUR TEENAGER

Teenagers love using the word "but":

- "But I'm busy now..."
- "But that's so unfair..."
- "But my friends don't have to do this..."
- "But I can do the homework later..."

Show empathy by first acknowledging what your teenager has said:

- "I can see that you're in the middle of your game..."
- "I know this seems unfair to you..."
- "I understand that your friends don't have to do this..."
- "I know it seems like your homework isn't urgent..."

CONCLUSION

By applying these 10 tips, you'll build a stronger relationship with your teenager.

Over time, your teenager will go from not listening to you, to listening to you willingly!

**WANT YOUR TEENAGER TO BECOME
MORE MOTIVATED, FOCUSED AND
RESPONSIBLE?**

I work with teenagers 1-to-1 to equip them with the
mindset and skills for success.

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