



Christian Counseling

Equipping People for Life...

Connecting with your Teenager

Many parents ask me what they can do to connect with their teenager. They feel they're losing touch and can't do anything right when it comes to reconnecting.

The following are suggestions for making your time with your teen much more rewarding for you and for them.

- Check the feelings behind what you are saying. If they don't encourage or edify, exchange them for something more **positive**.
- Have respect for their different view of reality. They don't think like you think. *They are not supposed to.*
- Accept that YOUR way is not the ONLY way. They have thoughts and feelings that count too.
- Find empathy in your heart and show it. Even if you don't agree with them, you **can** understand how they feel.
- Be curious. You DON'T know what it is like to be a teen in 2003. It's different. You need to know HOW, if you really want to be a part of their life.
- Wait until they say all they want to say and then ask if they would like to hear your opinion or advice. Respect a "No, thank you."
- Let your teen have the last word. Even if it's rude. The more you practice these steps, the less rude words you'll hear.
- Avoid power struggles. Power struggles ALWAYS end with a winner and a loser. Does your teen have to be a loser to get along with you? This does not mean that you must give in all the time. There are better ways to communicate and negotiate. Learn them!
- Respect them and use only a voice and words you'd use with a dear friend.
- Make lectures short and sweet. Did you know that kids can only listen to about seven sentences before they stop paying attention ("zone")? They know the "voice", the pitch and "the lecture" as well as you. To be honest, expecting them to listen past seven sentences is.....well.....unrealistic!

IF YOU DON'T MODEL IT FOR THEM, YOU WON'T GET IT FROM THEM!

Children are a gift of the Lord, children are a reward from Him. Like arrows in the hands of a warrior are sons born in one's youth. Blessed is the man whose quiver is full of them!

Psalm 127: 3-5