



When Worlds Collide: Surviving Our Teens/Surviving Our Parents

Adolescence is a confusing, tumultuous time.

What needs to be accomplished psychologically by teens and parents?

Tasks of the adolescent: to separate, to form an identity, become an individual, to begin making important life decisions. (How scary is that, for both adolescents and their parents?)

Tasks of the parent: to try to understand the changes, to take good care of ourselves, to cope with the sense of loss that keeps popping up, and fill the void with positive new opportunities.

We try to do our best to get along.

But just when we start to think we know what's going on, all the rules seem to change.

What worked yesterday doesn't work today.

Why not?

Between relationships, school and home expectations, thoughts of the future, and all the growing that is happening, there is a lot of pressure on teens, which causes tension.

Anger is the automatic response to tension. Beneath the anger, however, are complicated emotions, including worry, fear, insecurity and vulnerability. Many of these emotions are just part of growing up. But in the meantime. . .

What can we do to be better together?



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- ◆ When you feel angry: STOP/time out. Breathe, count to 10, go for a walk, etc. Try not to let things escalate; try to respond, not react.
- ◆ Refrain from name calling or labeling.
- ◆ Problem solve: GET ALL THE FACTS, brainstorm solutions together, and move forward.
- ◆ Don't hold grudges! Work out nagging issues slowly and methodically.
- ◆ Try not to take it personally, whatever it is.
- ◆ Listen, listen, listen.
- ◆ Parents: catch them doing something right. Tell them, thank them, but do not expect appreciation. Your opinion of them IS important to them, despite evidence to the contrary.
- ◆ Try to let go, just a little, of needing to be right.
- ◆ Try to respect and value differences: Unless the lyrics are dangerous (even if the lyrics sound disturbing), different tastes in music do not mean that either choice is “bad,” even if you do not like it.
- ◆ Ignore the small stuff (the mumbling under the breath)
- ◆ Think about what has worked in the past
- ◆ Establish expectations: What is the curfew, and what will happen if it is not kept.
- ◆ Try not to give each other advice: You will both end up feeling belittled if you do. Talk about the possibilities instead
- ◆ Look for ways to compromise.
- ◆ Do not expect to always find ways to compromise. The arguing process is part of the growth process, it helps teens to discover who they are.
- ◆ Rethink it: turn the negative into a positive.
- ◆ Let your teen know you are there if needed. They can always count on you to help—without judgment.
- ◆ Social things are good for everyone. Get involved in positive activities.

If stress or anger become overwhelming, NewBridge can help. Call us toll-free at (888) 746-9333 or visit www.newbridge.org. NewBridge is a nonprofit provider of behavioral health and education programs and services.

