

Surviving Adolescence...

a Brief Guide for parents and other caregivers...

part 4: Tips from Teenagers (part 1)

In Parts 1 – 3 of this series, looked at adolescence as the vital stage of development for young people, moving from the protected and dependent stage of childhood, into Independence of adulthood.

Only by 'doing it right' can young people then move into the stage of emotionally joining with another, the stage of Interdependence.

The stage of adolescence is about forming an identity outside of the family; it's about developing a greater understanding of the young person's sexuality and gender orientation...

it is about the young person developing the ability and skills to feel comfortable and safe, and become a healthy, productive, effective member of society...valuing themselves and valuing others.

In this next part, I want to give you some messages from young people...



These have been collected over many years working with adolescents and with parents and other caregivers...

Tips from Teenagers...for Parents and Caregivers...

Number 1.

Don't take my anger personally.

This is a difficult challenge for many parents/caregivers. The anger and possible...ok, actual rejection by young people almost definitely will occur! And most often, it will trigger off deeply held feelings in parents/caregivers. While the anger might be directed toward you, don't take it personally...it really is just a 'push' of the young person against established rules and conditions...as a way of the young person finding out who they are!

However... Having said Tip Number 1... the second most important tip:

Tip Number 2.

Be firm with me...make sure I have Boundaries.



Ok...isn't this a contradiction? Young people will push away from you... but still want Boundaries! Just what does this mean? Well, young people, while they go about exploring the world and themselves, still need a sense of safety and security. Boundaries, including rules, still need to apply. The young person will push against them of course... that's their job.

But too many parents/caregivers don't set boundaries and give the young person too much freedom, too soon...before they have the maturity to fully understand the consequences of their behaviour.

However, many other parents try to impose too strict boundaries which then results in further rebellious behaviour of the young person.

Tip Number 3.

Give me an iPhone...and an X-Box...and a motor bike...and a...
No, wait... tip number 3 is...

Don't Spoil me!

Young people will ask and even demand things from you. They will compare themselves to their peers and try to make you feel guilty about 'not being good parents'...don't do it! See Tip 2. When we get everything... or nearly everything... we want as young people, that is what we will expect as we grow into adulthood... we call this a sense of entitlement...



Number 4.

Be consistent

It is vitally important that as parents/caregivers, you are consistent with what you say and do, with your teenager. It is from consistency that they will learn to trust you...they will learn what is safe, and what is not. If you say yes one minute, no the next and then maybe the next...then your young person will never know where they stand... this creates uncertainty and anxiety. And...remember also, that if you are in a two parent/caregiver family, your teen will, sooner or later, try to play off one against the other... be careful... as two caregivers, you need to be as one...!

Tip Number 5.

Be Real...please be Real

Too often as parents/caregivers, we believe we must be 'perfect', or know everything, or always be right. With your young person, remember these things:

- Be honest... talk in a way that is appropriate for your child, but be honest
- Admit your mistakes... we are all fallible... we all make mistakes. This helps your young person know that she/he will also make mistakes... but will help them to know that it is ok to admit they're wrong...
- Apologise when appropriate... again... it will help your young person acknowledge their mistakes
- Don't make unrealistic promises... Your young person will feel let down when you break your promises... and over time, your young person WILL learn not to trust you...or maybe even others



More tips from teenagers in our next blog...

If you would like more information or support related to your young person, contact us at inSync for life.

We've all been there!

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