



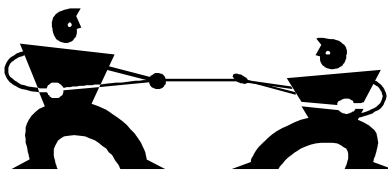
More than a Child- Not quite an Adult

Brian Howell, Child & Youth Counsellor

Adolescence is often described as the transition from childhood to adulthood. It's a time of growth and change on many levels. Physical and hormonal changes are evident. Puberty and interest in intimate relationships develop. And then there's the 'who am I' question as the teen begins to see that they are an individual with their own thoughts, feelings, values and opinions (which are usually not the same as their parents). With all this change going on, it's easy to see why adolescence is often a tumultuous time, not just for teens, but for parents as well.

Here are some suggestions which may be helpful in averting conflict and riding out tough times while appreciating the difficulties your son or daughter may be experiencing at this time in their life.

Expect some self centeredness. This is a normal part of adolescence for many teens and is part of the process of learning to balance their needs with the needs of others. Many parents cry "attitude!" and assume battle positions. Try to relax. Self centeredness is normal and in time your teen will realize they are not the centre of the universe.



Avoid power struggles. Conflicts arise. That can't be avoided. But many parents have difficulty resisting the gravitational pull to engage in verbal combat. This of course will only escalate tension and strives only to "win" rather than "solve" a conflict. Be the adult and say "wow, we both seem to be getting pretty worked up. Let's go calm down and try to talk about it again later."

Don't be drawn into pressure cooker situations. This is where your teen gets a call to come to a party (or whatever) right now! Your teen wants an answer immediately, telephone still in hand. This is an important learning opportunity – for you and your teen. Keep your cool and say – "Sorry, but I need sometime to think about this". Too many regretful decisions are made by parents who feel "over a barrel".

Are you looking to your teen to make you feel good about yourself? Careful! Too often as parents we get hung up on needing to feel appreciated or to have our self worth confirmed by our kids. Often our adolescent will say things that hurt. They haven't yet learned the impact of their words on others. So tell them, "I felt hurt when you said ...", but don't go overboard. A tearful tirade about how 'you don't respect me' or 'you ungrateful little ...' is not going to help your teen or you.

...we are the "role model" for how to be a healthy adult.

Parents don't always have the same view of a situation or how best to address it. That's to be expected. But you'll find it helpful to try and discuss these differences parent to parent before going to your son or daughter with your decision on whether to let them: go to the party, take the car, sleep over etc. Strive to harmonize your different approaches. That way you'll be less likely to have "the good parent bad parent" situation.

When dealing with your teen remember who the adult is. This doesn't mean "I'm the one with the authority here!" It means 'teach through example'. Too often we give into frustration and become teens ourselves. We abandon reason and try to push our way through and we forget that we are the "role model" for how to be a healthy adult.

Go easy on yourself. Parenting teens is a tough job. Bottom line! We are going to blow it sometimes and say or do things we regret. Get support from other parents who are struggling too. (stay away from the ones who just bad mouth their teens). Some of the warmest times we have with our teens are when we can go back and say "Sorry I yelled at you" or "Sorry about what I said". Look for those times when you really enjoy your adolescent son or daughter and remember what a great person they are.



Remember...

It's easy to contact EAP!
Just call locally 549-5561 or toll free **1-888-409-4499**. Also the 24/7 *After Hours Emergency* toll free number **1-800-668-9920** gives you direct access to a professional counsellor.

HOW DO I GET MY TEEN INTERESTED IN BUDGETING AND CREDIT?

Tim Utting, Credit Counsellor

Today many young people are interested in the wonderful world of the Internet. If your kids enjoy surfing the net there is a web site that you can add to their list of favourites that can give them a lot of good information about budgeting, credit and the wise use of money.

The Canadian Bankers Association has sponsored a Web site at www.yourmoney.cba.ca that offers a dynamic look at topics that teenagers are often prone to ignore. It is easy to navigate through the site and it offers a number of useful exercises that get your teen thinking about budgeting, credit, and money management. The questions are designed to help your teen think about the adult challenges and decisions they will soon be making regarding their own finances.

You may want to go through the exercises yourself as well and test your own knowledge. By going through this Web site, you just might learn something about your teen's knowledge of these important issues while upgrading your own.

For more information regarding your budgeting options for retirement saving, please contact FSEAP to book an appointment with a Credit Counsellor.

**FAMILY
SERVICES**



**EMPLOYEE
ASSISTANCE
PROGRAMS**