

The Myth That Your Child Needs You Less During Adolescence

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Many times we see and hear how teenagers just don't want to have anything to do with adults. It is even been normalized in our society to a point that parents are conditioned to expect and accept this phenomenon. However, while the period of adolescence is a time when most teenagers want more freedom and time to themselves, developmentally teens still need relationships with close, trusting, caring adults. Between school, soccer, hockey, band practice, TV, homework, and friends it's easy to get caught in the idea that family time or one-to-one time with your kids is not that important. But it is important if you want your teen to become a confident and successful adult.

Adolescent girls and boys long for and appreciate having an adult that they can trust and open up to. As a parent, you can be the adult that they turn to when they need help. The power and advantage you have is that you are an adult who has gone through many life experiences and have made it to adulthood. On the other hand, teenagers are not full grown adults and do not have the confidence gained through life experiences. Many teens act as if they are confident or believe they know it all, but when confronted with

the reality of making life choices, dealing with responsibilities that come with age, or dealing with emotional turbulence, life can become very overwhelming, confusing, and frightening at times. We know from brain research that the adolescent brain is not completely developed. Your teen therefore needs your guidance when making decisions for the present and for their future. We don't want to necessarily make the decisions for them but we want to help them in the decision making process and encourage them take on the responsibility of their choices.

On the one hand, teenagers often make fun of adults and say how out of touch parents are with adolescent lives. However, being an adult 'outsider' can also be such a powerful position because it makes you a safe person to go to when things get tough and unbearable. This is particularly true regarding issues that may be too embarrassing for your teen to share with his or her peers.

Some Topics May Be Easier For Your Teen To Discuss With You As Opposed To Their Peers

Of course there are many secrets that teens keep from adults, however, there are also

just as many secrets that teens would never share with each other for fear of humiliation should their friends find out. For example, there are not many 17-year-old boys who will share feelings of hurt with other teenage boys. For girls, there can be the pain and disappointment of the sudden rejection by a group of girlfriends, which would be difficult to discuss with other school friends. In both scenarios there usually is a lot of pretending and saving face in front of peers. But this doesn't need to be the case with you as the parent. You, as the adult, can be that safe person that can listen and help them accept themselves and what they are going through without the harsh judgment that peers might give.

What many teenagers go through in their daily lives can at times cause turmoil, self-doubt, and fear. Also there are feelings of hurt, sadness, and loss, which can cause internal chaos at times. Often peers are not able to support them in a way that you as a parent can.

It may seem that your son or daughter may not have any time for you until they need money, a ride, or something. However, do not let that turn you away and think you are not needed emotionally. If your teen is reluctant to spend time with you then make an

effort to find something enjoyable to do together, even if it is something simple and only for a short time.

Being a mature, stable, and emotionally available adult is a key ingredient that you can give your kids what other teen peers cannot. This gives you the opportunity to foster an important connection to you as the parent for your teen.
