

HOW TO HANDLE your parents

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Parents get a lot of advice on how to handle their adolescent children, but what about some advice for teenagers on how to deal with their parents?

5 Psychologist Raymond Freedman offers some tips ...

What is adolescence? It starts when you are aged between about ten and thirteen and is a period of rapid physical change 10 which transforms you from a pre-teen child, dependent on your parents, to the independent young adult that you become in your early twenties.¹ Here are some of the most common social and emotional changes 15 that happen during adolescence.

All these changes are perfectly normal, but it is important to remember that they will affect your relationship with your parents and that they may be a source of conflict and arguments. So what can you do 35 to make life easier and make sure that you stay on good terms with your parents?

Firstly, your parents will feel much better if you let them know that you still love and value them. Remember that they have lost forever the little child you once were.⁵

40 Secondly, try to agree rules and boundaries. You may feel these are unnecessary, but your parents' main concern is often just to keep you safe. Once you have agreed what is and isn't acceptable behaviour, try to stick to it. It may feel like a nuisance to remember to phone them and let 45 them know where you are, but make the effort anyway.

Thirdly, try to understand why they might be irritated by 50 your behaviour. Do your parents get cross if you spend three hours chatting with friends on social media and leave your homework till the last minute? That's probably because they want you to do well at school.

Finally, it's all about communication! Keep talking to 55 your parents, tell them about what you did today, let them know where you are going, and ask for advice if you need it. The more disconnected they feel, the more critical, distrustful and controlling they tend to become. Who wants parents like that?

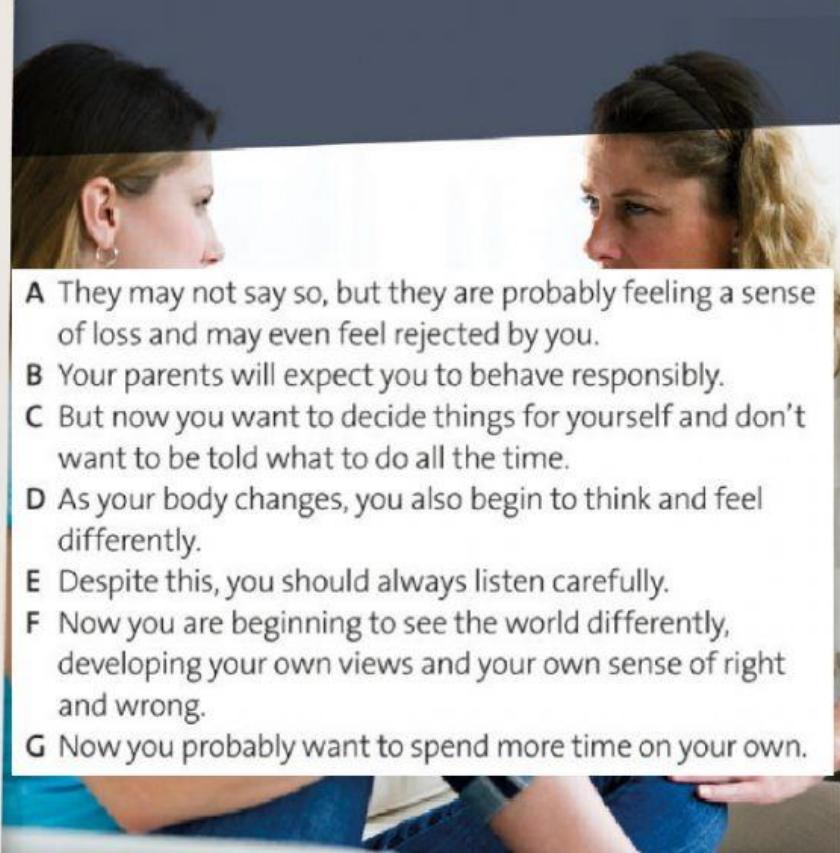
FREEDOM You may not want to spend as much time with your parents as you used to. You want more freedom to choose who you see and when. You may feel that your friends are as important to you as your family.

PRIVACY You used to be most happy in the company of your 20 parents.² You need your own space and some privacy.

INTERESTS You have new interests and they might include activities that your parents do not understand or think are a waste of time, such as playing computer games or chatting on the internet.

DECISIONS In the past, your parents made most decisions for you 25 and told you what to do.³ You may resent them telling you to go to bed, tidy your bedroom, or come home by ten o'clock.

OPINIONS When you were younger, you didn't have many strong 30 opinions.⁴ Adolescents are often idealistic and feel impatient and at odds with the adult world. You may feel that you have all the answers, while many adults don't have any!



- A They may not say so, but they are probably feeling a sense of loss and may even feel rejected by you.
- B Your parents will expect you to behave responsibly.
- C But now you want to decide things for yourself and don't want to be told what to do all the time.
- D As your body changes, you also begin to think and feel differently.
- E Despite this, you should always listen carefully.
- F Now you are beginning to see the world differently, developing your own views and your own sense of right and wrong.
- G Now you probably want to spend more time on your own.

Fill in the gaps 1-5 with the sentences A-G

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