

# 7 Ways to Connect with Your Teens

Here are my dos and don'ts with teens. Let me know if you can think of more that should be on the list and PLEASE let me know how they work for you! - Molly

## 1. Don't Re-Assure Them about the Future

Teens often feel overwhelmed by thoughts of the future. They are cynical about politics, and worry about school shootings and climate issues. Things that were far from my mind when I was their age. When we try to focus them on how bright their future is - as we are re-assuring them that life is ok - it doesn't help. Instead, STAY IN THE NOW with them.

## 2. Do: Enter Their World

Find ways to enter their world. Tune-in to the moment. Call it mindful parenting or conscious parenting or present moment parenting, but TUNE IN. Be open to their interests and activities, even if they seem foreign to you. Show genuine curiosity about what they're passionate about. "You seem so happy when you are...laughing with your friends" "How does it work when...you are trying to kill that monster in that video game?" "How many episodes of ...this anime ARE THERE?!?"

## 3. Don't Talk to Them

Avoid sit-down, eye-to-eye serious talks, especially on uncomfortable topics. Teens often prefer alternative methods of communication. Try taking a walk, driving at night (so they don't have to look at your face), or writing them a note. Mention the uncomfortable topic with as little of your own emotion connected to it as possible. "I've noticed that...you seem to be talking to "so and so" a lot these days." "...you don't seem like yourself when you come home from school."

## 4. Don't Fix Their Problems

When your teens talk about their problems, LISTEN to them and VALIDATE their feelings IN THAT MOMENT. Ask questions like, "How would it work if..." Instead of jumping in to fix things, focus on being a supportive listener.



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## 5. Do Tell Them You Trust Them

Express trust, whether it's small or big. If they never hear that they are trusted, they never learn to trust themselves. Say things like, "I trust you to tell me if you need a reminder to do the dishes or if you can do it on your own." This helps them learn to trust themselves. "I trust you to think about how I can support you, and let me know. Because I love you so much!" "I trust you to tell me the best way I can love you when you feel like this."

## 6. Do: Ask Them for Help

Teens need to feel needed. Ask for their input and assistance in solving problems, whether it's a personal issue or a household task. For example, "I'm struggling with XYZ while I'm busy with work. Can you think of ways to help the household? Should we discuss this now or in 30 minutes?" or "This happened today in my life, and it made me feel \_\_\_\_\_, do you have any advice?"

## 7. Don't Hide Your Own Feelings

Working through struggle in a healthy manner is SO IMPORTANT TO MODEL for teens and pre-teens. Model healthy emotional expression and problem-solving. When you experience difficulties, show them how you work through it. Teens learn more from your actions than your words.

**Remember, connecting with your teens is an ongoing journey.**

**By respecting their preferences, being a good listener, and fostering trust, you can strengthen your relationship and help them navigate the challenges of adolescence.**

**For personalized guidance on parenting your teenagers, feel free to reach out to me.  
I'm here to support you on this incredible journey!**



**Molly Feigal Parenting Support**

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