

When Your Teen Is Driving You Crazy

by Kathleen McCoy, Ph.D.

It happens to most parents from time to time. Your teenager may be a good kid. He or she may not have serious problems, but there are times when your patience wears thin and when your coping skills waiver. What can you do when you teen is just driving you crazy?

1. If a specific behavior is driving you crazy, put some limits on the behavior. For example, if you must disagree - don't yell, if you must play acid rock - play it at a lower volume.
2. When you're feeling stressed out, take time out. Do something you enjoy as an individual or as a couple. Rediscover an interest of your own. Exercise, even if this means getting up an hour earlier in the morning.
3. Make use of a support system of other parents, either an informal network of friends or a formal parental support group. Share parenting tips and strategies and boost each other's spirits in the process.
4. Finally, keep your sense of humor. Sometimes the only and the best thing you can do when you have a teen is to laugh - and to persevere.

Why Teens Are So Critical

by Kathleen McCoy, Ph.D.

There was a time when your child thought you were perfect. Now your teen finds much to criticize and little to praise. Your taste in clothes and music is scorned. You may not be a paragon, but an embarrassment. What's going on?

Your child is working tempestuously toward one of the major goals of adolescence - leaning to be independent. In order to become less dependent, teens need to give new credence to their own ideas and opinions. They need additionally to believe that in separating from you they aren't losing so much. Separating from the person who loves them most would be overwhelming and cause incredible grief, were that person not cut down to very human proportions.

It can help to understand this process and give teens the freedom to have and voice their own opinions without verbally abusing parents and family. As the teen grows in competence and independence, of course, he or she will feel more secure and able to agree with you on occasion and to admire and accept you in new ways.