

12

A Quick Review

Here is a quick review of what you have accomplished at this point in the program:

1. You have given up responsibility for things your child does that bear no relationship to you. This has allowed your teenager to take more responsibility for his own life, thus forcing him to be more responsible.
2. You have shown your teenager that you have a fair reasonable right to expect your teenager to do or to stop doing things that do affect you.
3. You have shown your teen that you are courteous and reasonable and it is he or she who is not being fair by denying your requests.
4. You have shown that you are ready and willing to stand up for your rights, all the time maintaining a pleasant demeanor so there is nothing to give your child the claim that you are unreasonable.

At this point you have probably been rather successful in getting things running the way you would like. If this is the case, then for now on your main job will be to maintain what you have accomplished. Your child is still a teenager and he is going to occasionally forget to take out the trash or once in a while borrow your things and forget to ask. But when this happens you just plug in Step 3 and the whole problem will just blow over.

Also, if you have gotten this far in executing the program, then you undoubtedly have seen some major changes. Your relationship with your teen is probably much better and you have much more control over how your home is running. Your teen is giving you more respect and not stepping all over you. I want to stress that whatever you have accomplished at this point you have done without any use of consequences or conflict. There has been no direct confrontation, threats or punishments.

Often parents come to me and ask what types of consequences I recommend for certain behaviors. There is a place for consequences, but there is also a very effective way to gain complete control of your home without making it a battle of wills or direct confrontation. That is one of the very powerful things about this approach. It leaves you in complete control of what is happening in your home without you having to play the role of the bad guy, the strong guy or the disciplinarian.

However, we are not finished yet. If you have gotten this far and everything is finally under control then you should listen just to be informed. This will give you the confidence of knowing that if Step 3 ever fails you, you do have recourse.

Before Going Further

If you have not taken care of every problem or challenge that you are facing to your own satisfaction, you need not worry. There are still two more steps in the process. However, if you are still facing some challenges at home there are a few things that you should review before you go on.

The main reason parents have problems at this point is that they have not executed the previous parts of the program correctly or thoroughly. Often parents are still getting involved in things that really are solely in their teen's column; they are taking upon themselves responsibilities that do not belong to them. Another problem is often parents have trouble feeling their teens are responsible individuals. If you are still battling your teenager for control over things that belong in his domain or if you view your teenager as incompetent on some level, then you must take steps to correct this before you go further in the program. You cannot get your teenager to behave in a respectful and responsible manner if you don't give him respect and view him as a competent person. Your teenager won't avoid things that bother you if he is still in a power struggle with you for control over his life. Therefore before you go on you must make sure that:

1. You are giving your teen control over his own life.
2. You are showing your teenager respect.
3. You are really viewing your teenager as responsible. This means really believing it not just saying it.

You have to make these changes as a necessary prerequisite to get your teenager to comply with your wishes.

The other major reason that your teenager may not be behaving at this point is that he doubts your resolve to stand up for yourself.

- Perhaps you weren't firm or clear enough.
- Perhaps your child is so tied up with what is going on in his personal life that he just missed everything you were doing.
- Perhaps your child is getting so much psychological benefit from being defined as the "bad kid" that he can't afford to give in to you and be reasonable.

Whatever the reason, you do not want your child to grow up thinking that it is okay to trounce on the rights of others. With this in mind we are going to start on the final steps of this approach. Keep in mind that I am assuming by now you have made a sincere and reasonable effort to apply the program up to this point as it was intended.

Okay, for whatever reason it is becoming clear that your teenager has not yet caught onto the fact that you are also a person with feelings and rights that need to be respected. Now we are going to show your child just how serious you are and how you can stand up for yourself.