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Conclusion

This part of the program represents the main global approach to dealing with teenagers and the problems they cause you.

If you work through this program you can expect to have a positive warm relationship with your teenager when he or she becomes an adult. This is very likely to happen even if you had to go all the way to Step 6.

Parents are often afraid to execute this program because they are worried that by giving their children more responsibility they are giving them license to run wild. By claiming equal and fair treatment from their children, parents are afraid that their children will become angry, feel deprived or rejected. What actually happens is the reverse. Children become more responsible and in better control because they know that they will ultimately suffer the consequences of their actions. Remember, your child will be the one to suffer the consequences of his decisions. This is true even if you don't give over to your child responsibility for his actions. They are the ones who will ultimately suffer and pay for their own mistakes. They just don't realize it. Therefore they have no incentive to be more responsible.

When you stand upon your rights to have fair, polite and courteous treatment from your child, rather than feel angry or resentful your child will begin to treat you with respect. This is good for you. More importantly it is very good for your teenager. I will explain why shortly.

What usually happens when you execute this program is there is a brief amount of resistance followed by a very quick and noticeable improvement in your relationship with your child. Your teenager is happier now than he was before. I will explain why with a short story.

Whenever my four year old acts out or becomes abusive, I am fast to react. I quickly and definitively, without anger or negative emotions, execute whatever action is appropriate. For a major offence, like talking back to or not listening to his mother, I will usually put him in his room. If he is misbehaving at the dinner table I may sit him in the chair in my office until he feels he is ready to control himself better. One thing I have noticed is that his immediate reaction to being punished is anger and resentment. However, after the incident is over he is always much more loving and affectionate to me and his mother. The reason is that by showing him I am in control, I am affirming the adult child relationship that we have. This is very comforting for a child. It gives him a feeling that he is in his appropriate place and that I, his parent, am someone who is in control and he can rely upon.

I feel that your relationship with your teenager works the same way. Your teenager is still your child. He needs you to be an adult that he can respect and trust. It is very hard to respect someone that you can walk all over. It is also hard to respect someone who is treating you unfairly or considers you irresponsible. When you allow your teenager to take responsibility for his own life issues and you stand up for yourself, you become someone your teenager will naturally respect. All children need parents that they can respect. It doesn't matter what their age is.

This is why when you execute this program your teenager is going to be happier. True he will initially resist, the same way my four year old resists being given limits, but in the end your teenager will be happy that you are someone he can respect and rely upon.

If you have come this far in the program and executed what we have discussed then you have achieved the following goals:

1. You have improved your relationship with your teenager.
2. You have established your right to be treated properly.
3. You see your child as a competent individual.
4. You know how to help yourself in any situation.
5. You take responsibility to make yourself happy.
6. Your child is responsible to make himself happy.

For now on your main task is to maintain what you have accomplished. To do this you need to recognize and act upon two global principles.

View your teenager as a capable, worthy individual.

This you communicate to him by:

- Saying outright, "I trust you to make the right decision."
- Respectfully listening, while assuming that he or she can work out their problems.
- Enjoying your teenager's decision making.

Stand up for fair and equitable treatment.

It is easy to agree to these principles. It is much harder to continually apply them. However, this is your task all the while you are raising your children.