



## 3 STEPS TO A BETTER RELATIONSHIP WITH YOUR TEEN!

Has your relationship been a struggle with your teen? Have they made you so mad and angry that you are ready to call it quits?! Well, hold on! Don't throw in the towel just yet!

**Three steps to help you have a better relationship with your teen!**

### 1. Talk to your teen **NOT at your teen!**

We all want the same thing when it comes to any conversation...Respect! That is a two way street. We can't expect to get respect when we don't give respect. Nobody likes to be talked down to or likes to be made to feel stupid! Hey, don't get me wrong. Teens can be stupid! I know *I* was stupid as a teenager! Although I didn't think so! And that is pretty much what every teen thinks at some point or another! The ironic thing is they think **we** are the stupid ones! HA! We adults know better! And because we know better, we should really be aware of the way we talk to our teens. Even though it can be very difficult having a conversation with them, as they roll their eyes, look into the air at nothing, look at you but not at you, or just flat out ignore you! Yet, we *still* LOVE them!

***Tips to help you "talk" to your teen...***

- A. Calm yourself BEFORE engaging in a conversation. Go outside, take some deep breaths, and think about how you can say what you want to say in a manner they will hear. If you are mad and angry, you will talk mad and angry. You will be at a high level of anxiousness, and they will be at that same level and escalate from there. You can NOT have a productive conversation in anger!
- B. Now that you are calm, you can ask good questions about the situation. For example, *how did this happen? What is your part in the situation? What are you going to do to make it right? **NOT**...what is wrong with you?! Are you stupid? Are you ever gonna grow up?* Those are **NOT** helpful questions!
- C. Be sensible. Don't make idle threats...for example, *you're grounded from your phone, but then you never take it away. Or, you can't see your boyfriend/girlfriend tonight, and an hour later you let them be together.* Discipline your child, but **not** unrealistically...like saying, *you can't have your phone for 6 months, or, I'm taking your car away and your never getting it back!* You may "**feel**" that way! But, are you *really* going to do those things? Probably not! So **follow through** with what you say, and put **realistic action** to your words.



## 2. Say the big bad words, "I'm Sorry," and mean it!

Saying those rotten words, "I'm...sorry" is never easy! The mere fact that, I have to say **I'm sorry** automatically makes some of us angry, thinking, What?! Why do *I* have to say sorry?!! *I* wasn't the one who did anything wrong! That sometimes is in the eyes of the beholder. If we ask our kids how often do they hear us say we are **sorry**, we might be surprised on the answer. And...that's why we don't ask! There are a few (ok, more than a few) reasons why we need to say **I'm sorry!** NOT so you can have your **teen** walk all over you, or that you say it all out of guilt, or because you say it so often that it has lost any creditability. We need to say it because, if **we** don't say it, why do our **teens** need to say it? They don't! We can't expect them to say it ,if **we** NEVER say it! We always lead by example, not because we want too, but because that is the automatic roll of the parent.

Here is the awesome thing about saying "**I'm sorry**" to your **teen**, walls come down and they see a humble side of you that softens them and makes them feel like, WOW, they do care and they do know when they are wrong, and actually had the guts to admit it! Who doesn't admire humility? This gives them a new perspective on how they see YOU. And it starts to open communication and trust. If there is *no trust* there is *no* communication...*productive communication*, anyway.

Now this doesn't have to be a one time thing, and you never say it again. You say **I'm sorry**, because, maybe you over reacted, or because you shouldn't have said what you said, cuz words really do hurt, at any age, **especially from the parent!** When you say "**I'm sorry**" be specific about what you are sorry for. For example: *Go to them, and say, I just want you to know I was wrong in the way I acted (or for what I said to you). I should have never acted that way (or said \_\_\_ to you), and I really wanted you to know **Im sorry**, and I will work on my words and actions.* Simple as that! End of story! Humbly walk away. Do NOT sit and wait for a response and get mad if they don't throw their arms around you and say, you are forgiven! Thanks for saying that, it really meant a lot. Because, you will, more than likely be disappointed! Say it because you mean it, and you want to *build the gap* between **you** and **them!**

## 3. LISTEN!

Yes, Listen!! I can't even stress this enough!! LISTEN! LISTEN! LISTEN! **You can't listen when you are doing all the talking!** We as parents tend to talk and talk and talk annnnd talk until we don't even know what we are really even talking about anymore! That, my friend is called "rambling"! Who wants to hear that? Uh, nobody! To be effective in what you are going to say, SHUT UP! Seriously! I had to learn that too!



Believe you me, It's *not* easy! But what a difference it makes when you **learn to be QUIET**, *without an attitude, (you know what I'm talking about, sitting there looking at them with a smug look on your face, thinking, yeah, I'm listening ...and we wonder where they get it from!)* and you really do listen to what your **teen** has to say.

It's amazing the things they will say when we actually give them a chance to speak! They *will* talk **IF** we let them!!! And they *will* shut down **IF** we do **NOT** listen!

Listening, I think is the most difficult of the three, because you have to **stop talking** in order **to listen!** And most of the time we think we have to keep talking in order for them *to* listen! Which is completely false!

How many times have *you* wanted your **teen** to talk to you? How many times have *you* asked them to talk to you? How many times have *you* taken the time to **REALLY** listen to what *they* had to say? Did you hear the **unspoken words** or the **hurt** in their tone? Did you see the **deep sadness** in their eyes, or see and hear the **frustration** of not being heard? Did you? Really? There is nothing more a teenager wants then to be **heard and loved**. And that is why they will go find someone who "**loves**" them and who *will* "**listen**" to them in places they shouldn't be, if they are not getting it from YOU!

### ***Pointers on how to listen...***

- A. You can start the conversation by saying, "*I am going to let you talk, I am not going to interrupt you or make any comments.*" Then hold true to that!!! Be a man or woman of **your** word! And pay attention to **your** body language! Don't cross your arms and stare them down. Remember, **you** lead by example!
- B. When you ask a question, **DO NOT** answer the question yourself. Be OK in the silence. Sometimes they really are thinking of what to say, they just need a little time to process what you said, to know **how**-to answer.
- C. Let them do what is comfortable for them in how *they* talk...if they don't give you eye contact, and they mess with something on the table...**let them!**
- D. **Let them talk!!!** You may not agree with what they are saying, and that's ok, you don't have too! Stay calm and **really** listen. **Do not take anything personal! Take the focus off yourself**, and remember you said you were going to **let them talk!**
- E. Do **NOT** mock them! What they have to say **IS important** to them, and it should be to you. Give them a chance to say what they are thinking and feeling. It may take a moment for them to open up, and get their thoughts in order, because this is new for



them, and they may be testing the waters to see if they can trust YOU. You can't get into their world if you are not willing to *listen* to them *about* their world.

- F. After they have said what they need to say, some things you can respond with are... "thanks for talking to me" or "I'm glad I shut up so you could talk" or "I'm sorry for not listening to you sooner, because what you have to say is important to me" (*don't say this unless **YOU MEAN IT!** because they know if you do or don't!*). Then **STOP! Do NOT keep talking!!** Short and sweet is what *they need* in order to **hear** you! I'm going to say that again... Short and sweet is what *they* need in order to **hear** YOU! Give them a hug, say, I love you, and end it! Nothing more!!! For real! Shush! Silence! Zip It! Are you getting it??! GOOD! They will appreciate it, even if they don't say it! let them see a *change* in *you*, which in turn makes a change in them!

This won't be an over night change. Be confident and consistent in applying these new tactics. Eventually it will become more natural as you apply them and you will be encouraged as you start seeing a positive difference in your family. Don't give up! Stay strong! Keep moving forward! You will succeed!

**Are you ready to find out more information about a **Rewind into Relationship Workshop?** Are you ready to Rewind *your* Relationship with *your* Teen and attend or host a Workshop? Contact me, Shawna Partlow at [shawnapartlow.com](http://shawnapartlow.com) and find out more!**