

ARE YOU LISTENING?

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How do you react when you see your under-aged child with a pack of cigarettes on hand? Have you ever prepared yourself to react and have a line or two ready as a response to risky or inappropriate behaviors? Is your approach disconnecting you from your children?

Experts state that YOU can talk and your kids will listen when you LISTEN to your kids talk. You may do so by connecting to them and being closely informed about their own interests. Experts suggest you to the following effective ideas.

Listen Closely

If you listen to them more likely they would listen to you, and will feel more understood, have more trust, and be more interested in what you have to say. If you have a problem with your children, listen first, and then empathize with them. Listen to the content of their talk, reflect back how you think they are feeling, then move to the issue on hand. For example, if you catch your child with a pack of cigarettes, ask about it and listen to what he says. Then, encourage your child to talk about his feelings and reflect as accurately as you can. Maybe his doing it to appear older, or to impress his friends. When you know the reason, you will be better able to deal with the situation.

Listen to Yourself First

Plan your response. Parents often make offensive statements out of anger or frustration; you may not mean it, but children

would never forget them. Offensive statements hurt feelings, and lower self esteem. If you criticize or put your child down, he may hesitate to ask questions or listen what you have to say.

Don't Lecture

Instead, engage talk and ask what they think about issues; sex, drugs, alcohol, or daily routine events. You may engage in a discussion of different opinions or approaches, where he may express his view, and listen to your point of view. Ask teen questions and let them draw their own conclusions, as oppose to imposing your opinions.

Be Around and Close to Them

Children operate on their own time, so be there when the time is right. Talk and listen to them when riding the car, walking together, or when playing with them.

Give Them Their Own Space

Do not pressure them, but offer time and space to speak about important issues.

Inspire Your Child

Avoid being pessimistic and speak about inspiring conversations that would give them a sense what is important.

Do Not Yell

Be firm, but not yell; it would show your child you are out of control. Talk about the rules and the reasons for them, but don't lose control and yell. Children need a calm environment at home.

Emphasize the Positive

Reinforce the positives in life. Present alternatives to problems. Promote alternative activities that would give them good feelings like sports, music, dance, art, social relations and friendship.

This information was modified from the article *Listening to Your Kids*, by D. Mann

Quotes of the month:

"The first duty of love is to listen"

Paul Tillich

"Deep listening is miraculous for both listener and speaker. When someone receive us with open-hearted, non-judging, intensely interested listening, our spirit expand."

Sue Patton

We are on



Suggested Readings:

