

12 Things Not To Say To A Teenager

1. When I was your age

Actually it doesn't matter what you say when you get to that point in the sentence because the young person has already switched off and isn't listening. In fact, if you have been on the advanced training course on understanding teenagers, you will be able to read the LCD screen just inside their forehead it will be clearly stating yeah right, whatever.

Seriously though, you probably were never their age well chronologically and numerically you were but when you were their age the world was a totally different place. Research has shown that there are 3 main things missing from society today that were readily available when I was a teenager and those deficits make the world a different place. [I have written an article about the 3 things].

2. Sticks and stones may break

Put another way, don't worry what other people say to you or say about you because it doesn't matter. Now I realise that we shouldn't get our sense of worth from other people's opinions and if we are being picked on at school or wherever, that we should learn to rise above it and find coping mechanisms. So, your intention is probably sound it just comes across as ignore them, don't be so soft, rise above it, or as Australians are fond of saying get over it.

3. I will do that for you.

Now I am in trouble with all the teenagers that read this article because that is exactly what they want to hear, but it isn't good for them. Part of the process of adolescence involves growing up into responsibilities that previously were undertaken by our parent. Incidentally I blame my mother for not being able to iron, she never taught me now I realise I could learn, but it is easier to learn when you are younger [well that's my excuse!]

4. For goodness sake, pull yourself together

The teenage years are a time of intense and fluctuating emotions often at the mercy of hormonal change. They may feel from time to time that nobody is in control and that no one understands. If they feel vulnerable and are in tears the above comment can be read as rejection in a big way. They have not yet achieved a settled identity and part of the emotions is establishing who they are.

5. If you do that one more time Ill

OK, I will admit this one can be acceptable but only if you are prepared to actually do what you are threatening them with and can legally carry it out. I am sick of hearing parents in supermarkets threaten their children with empty threats it generates something in me that wants me to say If I hear you threaten that one more time Ill ... Hmm maybe its a natural response but an unacceptable one nevertheless.

6. When you are older you will understand

Again, this one has truth in it, but it isn't accepted or understood by the vast majority of young people. In some sense it is an adolescent version of those words we vowed we would never say, but invariably comes out at the end of a list of why questions because I said so. When you are older fits that category in that it doesn't help the young person understand the argument.

7. Just you wait till Dad gets home.

As a Dad this line just sucks. It sets me up as the bad guy in a no win situation and usually results in a request for discipline without adequate information. Either deal with the event as it happens or tell me about it when I get home just don't announce that you decided to take the tell me option.

8. You're Useless

9. If only you were more like your older sister

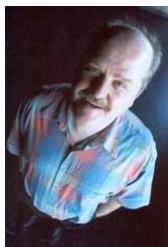
10. That's quite good For you!

11. You won't manage to do that

These all fall into a similar category, negative words when they should be hearing words of affirmation. Words dependent on their performance when they should be receiving unconditional love. Affirmation will become the subject of an article on its own in coming month look out for it [and feel free to remind me I said this!]

12. Dads gone away for a few days

In this age of marriage breakdown and parents splitting up it is very difficult to communicate the facts to children, whatever their age. However, lying or pretending are never valid options. As hard as it will be, it is always better to tell the truth short-term gain for long term pain, or short term pain for long term gain. You know it makes sense!



About Nigel

Nigel has been paid to work with young people since 1991 and did it voluntarily before then. He actually believes he hasn't been to work since then because he enjoys himself so much. He is available for private consultation and coaching as well as having resources available e.g. **Understanding Teenagers A-Z**.

Teencoach - Helping Young People Find A Better Way

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