



Attention

Parents and Educators
Get Your FREE Report

"The Top Challenges
Facing Today's Teen"

****FREE SPECIAL REPORT****

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Message to Parents and Educators:

I truly enjoy speaking with Teenagers. For some reason, I connect with teens... probably because I'm a big kid myself. I understand that most teenagers have 2 distinct versions of themselves. The first version can be challenging. This teenager thinks he or she knows it all and will say or do anything to be "cool!" That's right! This Teenage version is only interested in not showing his or her vulnerability. This can be frustrating to an adult!

But understand this, the other version of that exact same teenager needs you! They have goals, dreams, and most importantly, they are scared to death! It's our jobs as adults to...**connect with them!** Not make them...**connect with us!**

How do you do that?

1. Show up!

It's difficult to connect with anyone if you're never around. Adults are very busy and can't be everywhere. But schedule the time. Because of work, there were times I had to miss my son's soccer practice or game. (He understood.) But when I scheduled a future game and put it on my calendar, I would not break it! I was there!

2. Create an atmosphere of unconditional love!

Most teens believe they are only loved if they get good grades, if they do their chores, if they make the team.

Obviously, getting good grades and doing chores is part of teenage life. But don't judge their *overall worth* by them forgetting to take out the trash. Teenagers want unconditional love!

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3. Speak to teens with respect!

I know it can be challenging but teenagers are people. And no one (teenager or adult) likes to be *barked at* and spoken to like they are complete idiots! After a long day at work, most adults come home and have little patience. (I understand this because I have two kids.) But try to slow down and watch your tone!

4. Teen concerns are important!

Teen concerns may seem silly to us but they really matter to them! Let them express their feelings! Adults verbally say, “we care about teen issues.” But we show teens that we don't care by interrupting, not letting them talk, rolling our eyes, or multitasking while they're talking. When adults do this, teens feel like they're not being heard, and will slowly start to withdraw. Months later, you'll wonder why your son or daughter never opens up to you!

You'd be surprised how these simple actions make a world of difference to a teenager.

Please understand: I am not implying that we don't have discipline at home or school. Teenagers will run all over you if they don't sense structure and boundaries. I'm simply stating that adults need to “step up” and make more of an effort to connect with teenagers. I know you may not like their music, but make an effort to listen to a few tunes. You would be surprised how teens react when they think you know or have at least listened to their music. Ask their opinion on certain topics and engage with them in activities.

Don't forget, you were a teenager too! Do you remember how you felt about adults? Today's teen feels the exact same way!!

The Top Challenges Facing Today's Teen

Depression

Depression is a feeling of worthlessness. Whether from bullying, low self-esteem, or family issues...teenage depression is on the rise! There are different forms of depression, and it is often difficult to detect. (In serious cases, depression can lead to suicide.)

Look for these signs:

- General withdrawal.
- No longer wanting to socialize with friends or family.
- More and more wanting to be alone.
- Change in dress or clothing.
- Change in eating habits.
- Change in personal reading habits.

Help raise your teen's self esteem with music, sports, poetry, academics or any extra-curricular activity. Allow your teen to express **their** originality! Allow them to talk...without being judged.

Best Detection: *Regularly connecting with your teen*

Drugs and Alcohol

"Just say no"...isn't good enough! Teens **are** pressured to drink and do drugs! Yes...your teen too! And yes...bad teenagers can influence your teen to do bad things...but don't forget, good teens can influence your teen to do good things! So, it begins with choosing good friends. As parents and educators, we should know who our teen's friends are. Ask questions! Know their names! As they say, "you are who you roll with!"

Also, negative influences are not just coming from other teenagers. Social media, movies, music, and television have a huge influence on teenagers about drugs and alcohol. In all honesty, Hollywood is just trying to make a funny or thought provoking movie...but the images and suggestions in the movie can have a huge impact.

Think about this: The media is run by adults! It bombards teens with some truth, some half-truths, and some lies. Teens have very little influence on the media, however teens get blamed for the way the media influences them. Parents and educators must step in!

Best Detection: *Regularly connecting with your teen*

Sex

I know you don't want to think about it...but your teen is thinking about sex! Again, the media portrays a carefree attitude about sex, like it's not a big deal, and it happens everyday. But the media **rarely shows the effects or consequences of it**. Sex is sold to teens as a thing they should desire. Everything from sexy clothes, make-up, video games, & music. After all, everyone is doing it...right? You'd be surprised to hear that many teens don't want to have sex...but feel like they have to. Guys need to "conquer" and have sex so they can fit-in with all the cool guys. Girls want to be desired by the good-looking guys so they need to have sex to be noticed. Either way, they are only hearing the voice of "do it!" As parents and educators, we need to be the voice of "wait!"

Tips for Parents:

- Don't use "scare tactics" with your teen. It will probably backfire and lead to rebellion.
- Have an open and honest conversation.
- Ask questions.
- Are they feeling peer pressure?
- From the girls?
- From the guys?
- How do they feel about sex?

Regardless of their answers, stay calm and keep the lines of communication open. You'll have another opportunity to talk about it. Just stay engaged.

Best Detection: *Regularly connecting with your teen*

Carrying a gun!

Psychologically speaking, carrying a gun gives teens a false sense of reality. It's almost like the gun *thinks for them* and decides their actions! If there is a problem with another student the gun says, "handle this yourself...don't tell anyone!"

Parents and educators must intervene and explain the big lie to the teenager! First, carrying a gun almost always ends badly. They will not "ride off into the sunset." Teenagers carrying a gun will more than likely end up in prison or the grave...period! Also, "The Teenage Code" of staying quiet and dealing with problems themselves does nothing more than keep *the problem* in charge!

Why? Because there is no teenage code...it's a big lie!

Teenagers are developing into young adults. And as adults, if someone physically threatens you or your family...you call the police. If your house is on fire...you call the fire department. If you witness a medical emergency...you call an ambulance! Think about it, only teenagers have a mythical code where it is better to "man up" and handle possible emergencies...alone! That is completely backwards! It actually shows maturity to tell someone...it shows they are becoming adults.

Talk with your teen...have an open conversation about guns!

Best Detection: *Regularly connecting with your teen*

As parents and educators, we can't be in all places at all times. Teenagers have to live their lives and learn from their mistakes. But remember, all of our "pain & pleasure" comes from our choices. (Adults too!) So, we should assist our teens to make good choices with decision-making tips.

Here are 3 key points to decision making.

You're about to make a poor decision if:

1.) You're making a quick decision!

Very rarely in life will you need to make a quick decision. Take time to **think** before you act. A quick decision = poor decision.

2.) Your friends or peer group are trying to pressure you!

Think for yourself! If your friends won't respect you and your decision, then they **are not** your friends.

3.) You haven't thought about the consequences!

In advance, think about the consequences of: cheating, stealing, lying, drugs, drinking alcohol, or pre-marital sex. How do you feel about it?

- How would it feel to be in the Principal's office for cheating or stealing?
- How would it feel to be in the Doctor's office because you contracted a sexually transmitted disease or you're pregnant?
- How would it feel to call your parents from the Sheriff's office because you were caught drinking alcohol or doing drugs?

If you've already thought about the consequences of poor decisions, you can't be caught "off guard" in the moment.

ONE FINAL MESSAGE!

As adults, it can be very difficult to let go of our old ideas. Let go of our “one size fits all” mentality! After all, when we were teenagers, we didn’t get this much attention...and we turned out okay...right? Remember, things have changed! Today’s teen has more challenges than we did...so we must learn new strategies to stay engaged and connected to our teens!

Legendary basketball coach John Wooden once said,

“It’s the things you learn after ...you think you know it all that really count.”

Learn something new!! YOU CAN connect with teenagers making a positive difference in their lives!!!

I’m looking forward to your success.
Sincerely,

Darryl Ross

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"Darryl Ross is amazing! He truly impacts America's Youth!"

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