

Encouraging Parents

Be Encouraging Towards Yourself

It is also important to be encouraging and positive towards oneself. Being negative and uncaring towards yourself is no good for you and no good for your children. You can only truly be encouraging towards your children if you are encouraging towards yourself. Children need care from parents, as much as they need parents to care for them.

When it is Hard to Encourage

Many parents find it hard to encourage their children because they were never encouraged as children and in fact often experienced negative childhoods. In many cases, these parents have taken on board the negative messages from their childhoods and are extremely self-critical always putting themselves down.

Things only change when parents find a way of being more forgiving, accepting and encouraging of themselves. As the mother in the next example states, this change helped both her and her child.

Changing my feelings

'With my youngest child I'm sad to say that I found it really hard to encourage her. I think it was because she was born at a difficult time in my life and things didn't go well from the start. Initially, all I could see was the negatives in her personality and the many behaviour problems I had with her. This was really hard for me as a mother, as I thought I should be having only positive feelings and I used to feel guilty.

Change happened, when I shared these feelings in a parenting group and realised that I was not alone in having them. As a result, I stopped giving myself a hard time for having negative feelings. I was able to forgive myself and let go of my resentment. This freed me up to begin to appreciate the good things my daughter brought into my life.

When I stepped back I began to notice lots of things I liked about her presence in my life. I began to understand her more and was more able to be really positive towards her. The encouragement helped us both'.

Worksheet: Starting to Encourage Yourself

What I have done well as a parent

It is very easy to just focus on what you have done wrong as a parent and to beat yourself up about your mistakes. However, just as your teenager needs you to see their positives and to believe in them, so you need to adopt this encouraging attitude towards yourself.

What did I do well as a parent last week?

Something I did recently that I am proud of:

My Good Qualities as a Parent

What are your own good qualities as a parent that you can appreciate? Go through the list below and tick the ones that apply.

- | | | |
|--|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> I love my children | <input type="checkbox"/> I enjoy my children's company | <input type="checkbox"/> I am persistent - don't give up |
| <input type="checkbox"/> I have a great sense of humour | <input type="checkbox"/> I set aside one-to-one time with my children | <input type="checkbox"/> I look after my own needs |
| <input type="checkbox"/> I want what is best for my children | <input type="checkbox"/> I chat at mealtimes | <input type="checkbox"/> I have good friends |
| <input type="checkbox"/> I am a good listener | <input type="checkbox"/> I am able to apologise | <input type="checkbox"/> I try to be positive |
| <input type="checkbox"/> I am fun loving | <input type="checkbox"/> I talk problems through | <input type="checkbox"/> I am calm (most of the time!) |

Other good qualities I have as a parent:

The kind of parent I would like to be is:

Checklist: Listening Skills

Please rate how you are managing the ideas below. This may help to guide you over the next few weeks.

		Strongly disagree	Disagree	Not sure	Agree	Strongly agree
1	I regularly have chats with my teenager, when I have time to listen.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
2	I give my child my full attention when I listen.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
3	When my child feels strongly about something, I try to set aside time to listen.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
4	In conflict, I make sure to understand my child's point of view before giving my own.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
5	I repeat what my child has said to make sure he feels understood.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
6	I pick up on my child's positive feelings (<i>you sound really pleased about that</i>).	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
7	I pick up on my child's negative feelings (<i>you sound really upset about that</i>).	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
8	I set aside times to talk through problems with my teenager (away from the conflict we are both calmer).	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

What I do well as a listener:

What I would like to do more of:

Worksheet: Problem Solving with Teenagers

Pick a problem that you can talk through with your child next week.

Problem:

Setting aside time to problem solve

When/Where will I raise the problem with my child?

How will I ensure my child feels listened to?

How will I help my child come up with solutions?

Top Tips for Problem Solving

- ➔ Pick a good time to talk.
- ➔ Always first listen to your teen.
- ➔ Give your view respectfully.
- ➔ Always first ask your teen to think of solutions, before giving your own ideas.

Worksheet: Family Problem Solving

Rules for Problem Solving

➔ Be Respectful

➔ Take Turns Speaking

➔ Listen to Everyone

PROBLEM

What problem do we want to solve?



What do we each think and feel about the problem?






OUR GOAL

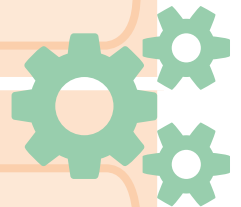
What do we want to be different? What will things look like when the problem is gone?

When do things go well in our family? When does some of our goal happen?



SOLUTIONS

What are possible solutions to the problem?



Which solutions might work best?



ACTION PLAN

Name:

What I will do:

When we will meet again to review progress?
