

7 STRATEGIES ON HOW TO  
EFFECTIVELY COMMUNICATE  
**WITH YOUR TEENAGER**



*Soul*

# HI THERE & WELCOME



**Thank you for downloading this guide. I'm glad you're here.**

Let me introduce myself. My name is Sasha Lester and my passion and purpose, my WHY, is helping parents better communicate with their children all without the drama. The teenage years are the shortest duration in length and as such our work is compounded.

I come from a place of experience. I can deeply relate to the moments when you're sitting in the bread aisle at Coles crying because you just don't know what to do; when you're yelling non-stop at your teenager only to be met with a dull, "yeah, whatever" response. I even know what it's like to be on a first-name basis with the local law enforcement officers.

Professionally, I come from a varied background. I spent 20+ years working as an Executive Assistant in the construction, mining, oil and gas sectors, working for both private and public entities. Aside from that, I also have several businesses created against my name; a Jims Mowing franchise, a management rights business and, more recently, a social media consultancy.

Over the past four years, I have studied the material of Bob Proctor and Sandy Gallagher daily. Since then, I have gone on to work with some amazing parents, and those in the parental role who have completely transformed their lives from our work together.

As a mother to two teenagers, I'm well-versed in the challenges we face. This is why I am equipped to guide you through the pitfalls and struggles of what some refer to as 'life'.

**The teenagers of today are our leaders of tomorrow.** To begin to understand where they're coming from and support them accordingly, we need to communicate with them effectively, and in a way that they understand. This is the primary power we have to move forward and guide them into adulthood.

As a parent, too, you'll understand that is often easier said than done. However, it's not impossible.

By reading this short booklet and implementing the strategies where possible, you will notice a huge change with not only your teenager, but with your family dynamic as well.

**Let's dive straight in!**

# WORK ON YOUR COMMUNICATION SKILLS

**1** Working on your own communication skills first and foremost can be a positive step forward in helping minimise the aggravation, upset and conflict that occurs between you and your teen.

You cannot control other people's actions or reactions, even those of your child. But, you can manage your own. That's why understanding what triggers you in a conversation, how your reaction scales in certain situations and what works and certainly doesn't work can be endlessly beneficial in opening up the lines of communication with your teenager.

Often, it can be our reaction to something that shuts them down and, essentially, shuts them up. When this happens, easy communication becomes a far fetched dream.

Working on your communication skills won't happen overnight. It takes dedication and determination. However, it could result in the most substantial progress you'll have made with your teenager for the longest time.





# 2

## LISTEN (AND HEAR)

When you're at your wit's end, battered and bruised by parenthood, simply sitting and listening can be a challenge. Yet, it can be the most effective way to open up the lines of communication currently missing between you and your teenager.

Giving them the space to speak freely without any judgement or opinion from you can move mountains for your communication issues.

In these moments, you will learn more about your teenager than ever before. You open up an opportunity to understand their perspective, grasp where they're coming from, and eliminate future situations where impossible communication issues occur.

If the time comes for you to respond, make sure you show that you've actively listened to what they just said. Responding with interest will show them that you've genuinely heard what they've been talking about and taken the information on board.

**I repeat, this progress will not magically happen overnight.**

It takes some discipline from you and the willingness of your teenager to speak.

Be gentle, initiate conversations, truly listen and see the results you get from simply sitting silently, listening to what they have to say.

Sometimes our parental instinct is to jump right in and "solve" a problem when all our teenagers want is for us to listen, and hear, what is going on in their world.

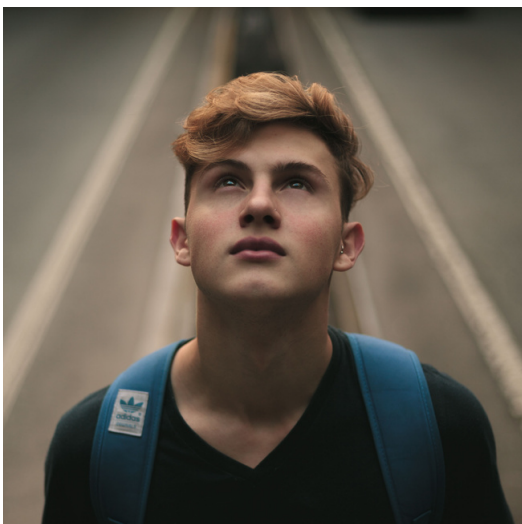
# 3 TRY OPEN, NOT LOADED, QUESTIONS

Conversations take at the very minimum, two participants. After you've listened to your teenagers thoughts and opinions, it will be your turn to keep the conversation flowing.

Asking them open and leading questions can help you to find out more about what they're thinking. It can build a connection and regain trust for both of you. Exhibiting your skills to have open, honest and non-judgemental conversations with your teenager will help them relax. It will also empower them to remain communicative in the future.

It's when we, as parents, show judgement, ask loaded questions, make them feel inferior or silly, that the communication is lost, and who knows for how long.

Once those lines of communication are closed, you need to start from scratch again to pry them open. This all comes back to YOUR reaction and communication skills, hence why it's so important to keep in touch with yourself.



# 4 DON'T MAKE IT PERSONAL

Showing emotion is the enemy when you're trying to open communication with your teen. You might hate what they're saying. You may find their behaviour ridiculous. But, you have to remember that these outbursts or differences in opinions are not about you. Taking their actions and thoughts personally only inhibits your happiness. Letting go and finding constructive ways to progress rather than showing your emotions and having an outburst of your own is far more beneficial in the long run.

This is not an easy thing to do. You'll likely be angry, frustrated, or sad – or all three at once. You are the adult in this situation, so it is your responsibility to defuse the situation. Your emotions are not their priority, and they will shut down when they see too much of them.

When the going gets tough – talk to your partner, a friend, a different family member about how pissed off you are at a situation. To benefit from ongoing communication with your teenager, don't let your emotions take over and don't take what they're saying personally.

“IT'S IMPORTANT TO MAKE SURE THAT WE'RE TALKING WITH EACH OTHER IN A WAY THAT HEALS, NOT IN A WAY THAT WOUNDS.”

Barack Obama

# 5

## STEP INTO THEIR COMFORT ZONE

A breakdown of communication can often happen when we force our teenagers to communicate with us in a way that WE find acceptable, in a way that WE want. They rebel, get frustrated, close down and won't communicate. Great, now what?

To keep communication flowing, it's essential to understand what they're comfortable with and how they communicate best. Is there a particular time of the day that they're more chatty? Do they prefer one-to-one chats in the kitchen, or do they feel more comfortable talking while doing something else (like gaming, driving, walking, texting)?

To keep a connection with your child, you need to be prepared to meet them where they're at. Step into the activity they like doing. Communicate at the times that you'll get the best response.

By tuning into their habits and comfort zones, you can reduce the stress, strains, and tears that so often go along with trying to keep communication alive between the two of you.

While this won't work on every occasion, as each interaction can't be timed perfectly, it can help when you're trying everything to keep communication alive.



# 6 DON'T SEEK THEIR VALIDATION

When you seek your teenager's validation or compliance, you've put yourself in a vulnerable situation. It's not up to your teenager to provide you with the assurance you need. You, and you alone, are responsible for that.

Parenting a teenager is often an insecure, uneasy experience. Yet, it's in the most difficult of times, when communication is dead, and your patience is gone, that you need to remember that your job here is to be their parent - not their friend. They won't always like you, and that's okay. Why? Because you don't need their validation to know that you're doing the best you can.

Once you stop relying on them for validation in various situations, you can work on the difficulties in your relationship with more ease. They don't have to like you, they don't have to agree with you, but they do need to talk to you. Once you have that, you'll be doing a-ok.

“**ANY PROBLEM, BIG OR SMALL, WITHIN A FAMILY, ALWAYS SEEMS TO START WITH BAD COMMUNICATION. SOMEONE ISN'T LISTENING.**”

# 7 YET, VALIDATE THEIR FEELINGS

Yes, it may seem like double standards that they don't need to validate you, but you should validate them. However, you must work to understand and empathise with their feelings rather than dismiss or downplay what they're going through to keep communication open.

Teenage years are tumultuous. Growth, mental challenges, friendship disappointment, academic pressure, romantic embarrassment... the list goes on.

Just as how you feel you're the only parent going through a struggle, they feel like they're the only teenager with their specific problems. Nobody has ever experienced stress, pain and anguish like them. However, receiving your validation rather than ridicule will help build trust, understanding and maintain communication between the two of you.

That doesn't mean you need to baby them or give in when their behaviour isn't acceptable, but saying something like: 'Wow, that sounds like a difficult situation to navigate, I'm sorry to hear it,' may be all they need to hear from you to start talking about what's really going on in their life.

## WHAT NEXT.....?

Communication can be the quickest thing to lose and the hardest thing to regain with a teenager. Every person is different, so not all methods will work with your child.

However, I hope you found some inspiration and motivation to keep on trying and striving for open and honest communication with your teenager.

If you're interested in learning more strategies and options from a fellow parent who's been through the extreme highs and terrible lows of parenting a difficult teen, then I'd love to hear from you.

- **Book a chat with me today!**
- **Join our community of parents**
- **Follow my updates on Facebook**

I am wishing you every success.

I promise you, you've got this!

Until next time,

*Zasha Lester*





Sash



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