



Parenting Age Specific Course

Lecture 3: Middle and High School

By Dr. Sameh Ragheb



I. Characteristics of the Teenager:

1. Wants to be independent

- ❖ Pulls away from the family
- ❖ Finds faults with the family and especially parents
- ❖ Does not like anything that's equated with childishness
- ❖ Likes to live a separate life
- ❖ Wants to prove that he/she can be independent
- ❖ Doesn't accept advice unless it's given with respect and valuing of independence

2. Wants to exercise individuality

- ❖ Wants to have own opinions
- ❖ Wants to be different from the family in some ways
- ❖ Wants to do things his/her way
- ❖ Questions accepted norms
- ❖ Tendency to be argumentative

3. Going through many rapid changes

- ❖ Physical changes of puberty and growth
- ❖ Emotional roller coaster
- ❖ Many internal conflicts –
 - Independence vs. need for family
 - Individuality vs. lack of confidence
 - How he is vs. how the world wants him to be (peers, family, society, church)

4. Has his/her own world

- ❖ Privacy and need for personal space
- ❖ Generation and culture gap
- ❖ Separate life from the family

5. Very self conscious

- ❖ Very sensitive about physical appearance
- ❖ Very sensitive about social appearance
- ❖ Easily embarrassed
- ❖ Very sensitive to criticism especially from peers
- ❖ Very mindful of peers especially opposite sex

6. Dealing with sexual development

- ❖ Lots of new and uncomfortable feelings
- ❖ Lots of social challenges in dealing with the opposite sex- an area of insecurity at the same time that it is an area that needs to be negotiated.
- ❖ Lots of societal and peer pressure regarding expected relations with opposite sex
- ❖ Lots of mixed messages regarding sexuality

II. Needs of the Teenager:

1. Areas of independent/autonomous functioning
 - ❖ Some room to exercise decision making even when it does not please the parent
 - ❖ Giving choices whenever possible and holding them accountable
 - ❖ Treating them as soon to be adults
2. Areas of individuality
 - ❖ Room to be different
 - ❖ Acceptance of questioning and showing respect for difference of opinion without need to agree
 - ❖ Understanding this is a different person from who you want them to be and not expecting total conformity.
 - ❖ Seeking their opinions and thoughts on different matters
3. Being able to fit in
 - ❖ wanting to fit in with peers, with society
 - ❖ wanting to have sense of belonging and acceptance
4. Being able to accept self
 - ❖ Having an identity
 - ❖ Being comfortable with who they are
 - ❖ Being comfortable with where they come from (family, culture, church)
5. Having healthy ways to deal with opposite sex
 - ❖ Opportunities for interaction within a group
 - ❖ becoming comfortable with their sexuality
 - ❖ becoming comfortable with what kind of relationships they will have with the opposite sex
 - ❖ Knowing how to form relationships with the opposite sex

6. Being able to ready self for adulthood
 - ❖ Seeing self as capable
 - ❖ Giving them responsibilities
 - ❖ Having respect of the parent even if not approving of everything
 - ❖ treating them as adults whenever possible
 - ❖ Having a healthy world view

III. Principles for Parenting the Teenager:

1. Communicate:
 - ❖ Has to be both ways
 - ❖ Who talks more?
 - ❖ Understand before intervening
 - ❖ Influence not change
 - ❖ Look for teachable moments not lectures
2. Negotiate
 - ❖ If you always win, you've lost
 - ❖ Negotiation facilitates compliance
 - ❖ Negotiation respects and builds up the teen
 - ❖ Think of the 3 baskets – You need some in every basket
3. Allow freedoms when responsibility for it can be handled and is accepted
 - ❖ Limits have to be based on teen's abilities not parents' fears
 - ❖ Better to say when something will be allowed based on demonstrating responsibility than just saying "no".
 - ❖ Learning experiences are better earlier when harms are smaller than later when harms are bigger
 - ❖ Mistakes are part of learning
4. Protect without smothering
 - ❖ There will always be risk – teen has to learn to gradually handle bigger responsibilities
 - ❖ Overprotection leads to either rebellion or dependence
 - ❖ Smothering is usually about the parent dealing with their own anxiety than about helping the teen. Teens can usually tell the difference and will protest more.

5. Supervise without micromanaging

- ❖ Accept that the teen has to do things according to their abilities not according to the parent's abilities.
- ❖ Micromanaging leads to rebellion or dependence whereas supervision leads to learning and growth.
- ❖ Micromanaging is telling the teen that they can't do it which is counter to all their needs.

6. Monitor without prying

- ❖ Prying destroys the teen's individuality whereas monitoring is to guide.
- ❖ Prying is a form of controlling leading to counter measures by the teen whereas monitoring is part of guidance and influencing not intruding and controlling.

7. Build trust not mistrust

- ❖ Your teen needs to know that you have some trust in their abilities.
- ❖ Your teen needs to know that you trust what they say.
- ❖ Your teen needs to be able to trust you.
- ❖ They need to trust that you will be truthful with them and that you will not invade their privacy.
- ❖ Trust breeds trust and mistrust breeds mistrust.

8. Respect the person and the differences

- ❖ Your teen needs your respect otherwise they will lose respect for you even if they fear you.

9. Influence not control

10. Parental unity

IV. Common Problems:

1. Boy/Girl relationship

- ❖ The more you push in one direction, the more the teen wants to go to the other
- ❖ Do not try to control choices directly but indirectly- set expectations based on responsible behavior not their choices.
- ❖ Understand what they are looking for and try to provide it to them in acceptable ways. For example acceptable opportunities to socialize.
- ❖ Education regarding the nature of relationships and how one intention can end with a different outcome.
- ❖ Seek more to teach and prepare than to restrict and protect
- ❖ Set expectations for your teen recognizing that they will have opportunities that you cannot control

2. Good/Bad friendships

- ❖ Same as boy/girl relationships

3. Freedoms/Restrictions

4. Power Struggles

- ❖ Oppositional behavior
- ❖ Control conflicts

5. Internet Dangers

- ❖ Interacting with anyone without knowing who they are
- ❖ Pornography
- ❖ Videogame addictions

6. Separation and individuation Problems

- ❖ Dependency – directly or indirectly
- ❖ Rebellion