

# ASSERTIVE PARENTING

There are no easy answers in raising teenagers. They can be obstinate, disrespectful, lazy, disorganized, and reckless. But they can also be brave, insightful, idealistic, and full of compassion and enthusiasm. Parents must assume the task of guiding their teens during this period of development from youth to adulthood. Children don't need parents to be "friends." Children need parents to be "parents." The task can be made easier by practicing **assertive parenting**.

1. Identify non-negotiable guidelines of behavior (no use of alcohol, tobacco, or other drugs).
2. Establish severe consequences for violating those guidelines.
3. Set guidelines and consequences according to what you believe to be appropriate, not according to what "society" believes to be acceptable.
4. Say "**NO**" when you need to.
5. Believe in your position and stick to it.

Parents may be met with resistance when their guidelines differ from those of their children. When this occurs and protests arise, the following responses can be helpful:

## ***Kids say...***

***Everybody's doing it.***

***Why can't you be like Molly's mother?***

***You want me to be weird.***

***You don't understand.***

***We can afford it.***

***You treat me like a child.***

***I want to be one of the gang.***

***You don't trust me.***

***You hate my friends.***

***You never let me do anything.***

***You won't ever listen to my side.***

## ***Parents say...***

➤ You're not everybody. You're somebody special.

➤ I'm not Molly's mother. I can only be myself and I want you to be yourself, too.

➤ I want you to be yourself.

➤ I understand that I love you and want you to be safe.

➤ We can afford it, but we don't need it.

➤ No, I treat you like a person your age.

➤ I'd rather you were "one of a kind."

➤ I trust you to handle situations appropriate to your age. I don't trust the environment out there.

➤ No, I love you.

➤ I love you and I will continue to let you do many things that are safe and healthy.

➤ I have listened to your side and I understand how you feel.

---

***By practicing assertive parenting on a consistent basis, you show that you care, that you are willing to set guidelines, and that you are willing to act.***



**IT ALL BEGINS WITH YOU!**