



HELPING TEENS NAVIGATE PEER RELATIONSHIPS

Friends Are Everything: Scenarios on Peer Relationships

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Friends have a tremendous influence on teens. Teens might say their “friends are everything” to them. The following scenarios depict common situations in which parents and teens find themselves. There are four scenarios written from the parents’ perspective and four scenarios written from the teens’ perspective. **Choose one scenario from each perspective to discuss using the instructions below.**

INSTRUCTIONS

- Read the scenario, and try to understand the parents’ or teens’ point of view. Answer these questions in your discussion: What is important to the parent in the situation? Why? What is important to the teen in the situation? Why?
- When considering a scenario from the parents’ point of view, think about how the situation should be approached given what we have talked about in this lesson about teens’ relationships with their friends. Answer these questions: If you were a parent in the scenario, what would you say to the teen? Why?
- When considering a scenario from a teen’s point of view, discuss how a conversation between the parents and teen might go. Answer these questions: What advice could parents give to the teen? Why?
- Consider peer relationships: What do teens need from their parents to develop healthy peer relationships and cope with negative peer pressure? What do parents need from their teens to be able to support them in effectively handling peer relationships?

PARENTS’ POINT OF VIEW

1. “Our daughter is in 8th grade. It’s really hard watching her day-to-day ups and downs over friends. First it’s this friend who has done something behind her back, and then tomorrow it’s someone else. There are a couple of popular girls she really wants to be friends with, but I don’t think she has the same interests they do. I remember junior high as being a hard time to get through. I don’t know what to do.”
2. “We gave our 14-year-old son a cell phone for his birthday, and he’s on it all the time. Texting, talking on the phone, on Facebook...The second it



goes off he *has* to answer it, even if he's supposed to be doing homework or in the middle of dinner. I feel like he doesn't want to talk to me or his mother at all, all he wants to do is chat with his friends. I miss the way it used to be when he would talk to us instead of being glued to his phone. I'm concerned he doesn't want to talk to us at all anymore."

3. "I'm concerned about my son. He's off all the time wanting to be with his friends. Now he's talking about getting an after-school and weekend job at the pizza place as soon as he is 16 and has his driver's license. I'm afraid I'll never see him. Plus, we've got a family wedding coming up this summer. I think it is important that we all go. He's already objecting."
4. "I'd really like my daughter to be popular. I wasn't when I was in high school, so I'd like her to have what I didn't have. It seems like you need the right clothes and the right car. I think we can afford some of that, but I always have to try to convince my husband. He says a few good friends are better than trying to be with the 'in' group."

TEENS' POINT OF VIEW

1. "Everyone on the wrestling team is going to bleach their hair blond. I think it's a great idea and the coach doesn't care. My mom went through the roof when I mentioned it. Hey, it's no big deal. It's just something fun we thought we'd all do for the tournaments. It will grow out, but you know what — I might even like my hair blond!"
2. "My best friend from 6th grade hardly talks to me anymore. I thought we would be best friends forever. She's all interested in boys, especially some of the older guys in our school. Yeah, there's a guy I like, too, but I'm not all hung up on it like she is. Plus she just isn't interested in some of the stuff we used to do. I feel kind of lost right now."
3. "I don't think my Dad likes a couple of my friends. He hasn't said anything to me, but he sure isn't very friendly or nice when they've stopped by to pick me up. I just don't think he gets what it's like to be in high school in this country. Maybe it was a lot different for him growing up, but so what? I don't even know if I should have my friends come around anymore. I'll just meet them somewhere else. He doesn't have to know."
4. "My mom finally let me get on Facebook last year, but now she got an account because all of her friends are on there, and she tried to 'friend' me! I said, 'No way!' and declined her friend request. I could make the settings so that she only sees some stuff, but she would know that I purposely made the settings that way. She's all upset with me because she thinks I'm keeping secrets, but it's just because I don't want her to see EVERYTHING on my page and all the photos of my friends and posts about our silly inside jokes. My mom insists I friend her and show her everything on my page but I don't want to."