



Communicating with Your Child and Teen Exercises

Exercise 1:

Cut a hole in the top of a shoebox and place it in your laundry room. Every time you get frustrated when attempting to communicate with your child/teen, write it down on an index card and place it in the box. Encourage your child to do the same. At the end of the month, take out all the cards in the box and talk about them with your child. Try to identify barriers or patterns that prevented you and your child from communicating effectively. Repeat this exercise monthly and keep a count of the cards from month to month to measure the improvement that is being made as time goes by.

Exercise 2:

People are often unaware of how they appear to others. This exercise creates an opportunity for parents and children to learn how one views the other. Role play with your child by switching places for a half-day to learn what it feels like to be on the opposite side of the spectrum. The parent should do everything their child would normally do and the child should do everything their parent would normally do. This exercise should preferably be done on a weekend instead of weekday for practicality purposes. Parents should encourage their children to be open and honest while engaging in this exercise and refrain from scolding them if they disagree with their actions and/or impersonation of the parent. Parents should also be candid when demonstrating their child or teen's behavior and give them a concise outlook of what their behavior looks like. This exercise will ultimately help both parties gain a deeper appreciation for the role they each play in reality and discover where there are areas for improvement.