

WHEN DISCUSSING AN ISSUE WITH PARENTS

AND THERE IS A DISAGREEMENT :

SOME REMINDERS

Things that might be helpful:

1. Talk about your own feelings. Tell why you feel the way you do. They won't understand unless you tell them; i.e. "I feel bad when you criticize me because I feel like I can't do anything right."
2. Clarify your feelings again if you think you are misunderstood. Parents don't always understand what you are trying to say the first time you say it, i.e., "Mom, "I'm not saying I can't ever do anything right. I'm saying that's how I feel when you criticize me."
3. Listen and check out what you are hearing your parents say by repeating what you hear. It's easy to misunderstand what they are really trying to say, i.e., "Are you saying that you don't want me to stay out late because you are worried that something bad will happen to me?"
4. Ask for clarification when you're not sure what was said. Parents don't always communicate what they're trying to say either, i.e., "Dad, I'm not sure I understand what you are saying."
5. Try to understand and check out how your parents feel. You can help them learn to respect your feelings by respecting theirs. i.e., "Mom, I hear you saying that you're really afraid that I might get pregnant."

Things that are not helpful:

Blaming others for what's happening, i.e., "You're always on my back for something. It's your fault that we have all these problems!"

Jumping to conclusions and attacking, i.e., "That's all you ever say. You're driving me crazy. What's wrong with you?"

Being defensive, i.e., "But everybody stays out late. Why do you want to be so mean to me?"

Storming off, i.e., "Well just forget it. I know you don't trust me."

Name calling, i.e., "Well you're just crazy."

DEALING WITH DISAGREEMENT (Cont.)

Things that might be helpful:

6. Ask your parents to listen to you. Set aside a time when you are most apt to have full attention, i.e., "Mom, there's something I want to talk about. Do you have time to listen?"
7. Respect their values so that you can teach them to respect yours, i.e., "I understand that getting an education is important to you and you don't want me to skip school."
8. Explore alternatives. There are some things you and your parents can find a solution to by compromising, i.e., "Dad, I understand that you're just not willing to let me do that. Could we talk about finding an alternative?"

Things that are not helpful:

- Interrupting, talking too long, i.e., "I don't care about that. You've got to let me do this because..."
- Disregarding their beliefs, i.e., "Oh, that's ridiculous. No one believes that."
- Being sarcastic, condescending, or smart alecky, i.e., "Oh, that's silly. That would never happen to me. Sure, I'm going to go out tonight and smoke dope. I love it!"

The tone of voice used in a discussion can also be critical in how the discussion will turn out. How you say something can be as important as what you say. Also, remember you don't have to agree with each other to have a relationship. You can also work towards agreeing to disagree. In addition, these tips on communication are helpful in other types of relationships, whether with friends or a boy or girlfriend.

Adapted from: The Link Counseling Center of Atlanta, Georgia