

PARENT BLUNDERS AND TEEN GOOFS

Here's a revealing questionnaire that would be effective on either Mother's Day or Father's Day. Give each kid a mimeographed sheet which contains two columns of numbered "Yes" and "No" answers, ten to each column. Then give the following questions to them orally and have them circle their response after each question. The kids should be as honest as they possibly can, and they need not put their names on their answer sheets.

In column one they must answer questions relating to their parents' attitudes toward them, and in column two, questions about their attitudes toward their parents. The total number of "yes" and "no" answers in each column can be totaled after the quiz and may then be used as a basis for discussion. Normally, whenever the parents score a high number of "no" answers, so do the kids (and vice versa). For example, if a kid says his parents do not act like they trust him, he will undoubtedly answer "no" to the questions about trying to earn and keep his parents' trust. The answers should show that both parents and teens have a fifty-fifty share of the responsibility for their problems.

Parent Blunders:

1. Do your parents listen to you when you have a family discussion?
 2. Do your parents act like they trust you?
 3. Do your parents treat your friends nicely and make them feel welcome?
 4. Do your parents admit their mistakes when they have been wrong?
 5. Do your parents openly express and show their affection for you?
 6. Do your parents avoid comparing you to brothers or sisters, or other youth?
 7. Do your parents keep the promises they make to you?
 8. Do your parents show their appreciation and give you credit when you do something good?
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9. Do your parents set a good example for you in their personal honesty?
 10. Do your parents use the kind of language in front of you that they told you to use?

Teen Goofs:

1. Do you listen to your parents when they want to share an idea or advice with you?
2. When your parents say "No" to your plans, do you accept that answer without complaining?
3. Do you try to understand the pressures and problems that sometimes make parents grumpy and hard to live with?
4. Do you say "Thank you" for everything that your parents do for you?
5. Do you try to plan something nice that you can do for your parents occasionally?
6. Do you say "I'm sorry" when you know you have been out of line or have said or done something you shouldn't?
7. Do you try to earn and keep your parents' trust by doing what they expect of you?
8. Do you play fair with them and discuss things honestly, without covering up for yourself?
9. Do you ask your parents' advice about decisions that you have to make?
10. Do you try to avoid problems and arguments by doing what you're supposed to before you have to be told?

WHAT I WANT FOR MY CHILDREN

This could be a good discussion starter on Mother's Day or Father's Day. Have the kids in the group think of themselves as parents. They should imagine that they have a child and that it is now their job to be a really good parent to that child. Then have them answer questions like these:

1. What will be the best way for me to make sure that my child has a happy, fulfilling life?
2. What will be the best way for me to teach my children my values and beliefs?
3. How will I discipline my child?