

What Parents Say / What Parents Mean

Parents often assume that their teens know what they are thinking. They love their teens and want them to be happy and successful. Parents know that it is their job to teach their teens to be responsible. They talk to each other, but sometimes parents and teens don't understand each other.



If parents want teens to understand them, they must choose words that let them know what they are thinking. Stephen Covey, *The 7 Habits of Highly Effective Families*, says much of the pain in families is caused by a lack of understanding. Good parent/teen communication needs words and understanding.

The examples at the end of this article shows parents how their words sometimes fail to express what they are thinking. Using short explanations, parents can put their thoughts into words. It might even be helpful if parents ask their teens to repeat back what they say. A few extra words can improve parent/teen bonds. Don't let a lack of understanding cause family pain and hurt.

Make up your bed.
I want you to learn good habits.

Clean up your room.
Your life needs to have order.

Be careful.
You're precious to us.

Don't drive fast.
We couldn't live without you.

Get off the phone.
Get off the phone.

Do your homework.
Learn everything you can.

Don't spend it all.
Always keep some for emergencies.

It's late.
Get the rest you need.

Pick up your clothes.
Pick up your clothes.

Good job in the play.
You make us so proud.

Turn the lights off when you leave.
Be responsible.

Finish your project.
Use your gifts and talents to their fullest.

Take out the garbage.
Take out the garbage.

College is important.
Being prepared for life is important.

Wear a tie.
Look good, feel good, be good.

And one that should never be confused:
We love you.
We love you.

Call the Parent Help Line. We listen. We can find you help.

1-217-544-5808 or 1-888-727-5889 from 10 a.m. to 10 p.m., 7 days a week.