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What Our Teens Need From Us©

- ◆ To listen and understand them. Specifically to understand how tough it is to be a teenager, and to not minimize all the stresses and pressures they are facing
- ◆ To have genuine empathy...based upon an accurate understanding and respect of what they are going through. Empathy means...what would it be like to be my teen in this situation, not what would it be like to be myself in this situation.
- ◆ To keep ourselves centered (we can't be dependant on their behavior for us to be OK). We need to stay the grown up.
- ◆ To have some reserves left for them. In a survey done of 1000 teenagers, their number one wish was that their parents weren't so tired and stressed out (especially about work). I don't know what your life is like, but if there is anything you could cut out or make easier, do it so that there is more of you available. Ideas include cutting out some activities, using paper plates, and crock pots so less of you is spent cooking and cleaning up. If financially feasible pay for extra help such as gardening or cleaning or even consider selling your house and moving to a smaller place – so there is more of you available.

- ◆ Lots of encouragement, even if it's just for little things, and small steps. They are a jumbled mess inside and are a "work in progress" even if they tell you otherwise. They need lots of encouragement.
- ◆ Help them practically navigate their world and decisions, remembering that their brain is under construction, and is not functioning at full capacity. Specifically they need help thinking ahead, and problem solving solutions to their problems. This is only effective AFTER they feel listened to and understood.
- ◆ Be available when they open up. It's often at night. Hang out near them; they will often open up when you are hanging out. If you can, stay up and sit nearby, and often they will just start talking.
- ◆ Take care of yourself. Get the support and help you need. If you don't take care of yourself, then you will be overly wrapped up in what they are doing in order for you to feel like you are OK. You need to be "OK inside" despite their behavior.
- ◆ If you are married, take care of your marriage as best you can. Stresses in the marriage often are felt and expressed by teenagers.
- ◆ Find effective ways to deal with your emotions, especially anxiety, stress, and disappointments. All of us are vulnerable to reacting in ineffective ways when we are not able to handle out emotions.

- ◆ To get them outside help if they are struggling with depression, anxiety or have gone through some kind of trauma. If your teen is dealing with any of these burdens, it is like having to handle the normal confusion of the teenage years with a 500 pound weight around their neck.

I hope these insights are helpful to you...hang in there...take care of yourself...get the encouragement and support that you need...you deserve it. Many Blessings from me to you

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

© Kim Fredrickson, M.S., Marriage and Family Therapist (CA MFC 22635) and Life, Parent, and Relationship Coach is the author of many popular CD's and articles that will help you build **Encouraging Relationships** in your life. To learn more about Kim and sign up for more FREE Relationships Tips like these, visit www.EncouragingRelationships.com as well as listen to a sample of her weekly Podcast, Encouragement for Your Soul at www.KimsPodcast.com/KimsPodcast

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