

Helping Parents help their children

1. Demonstrate that you want to help not NAG !!

How - Ask Qs - How are you feeling? - Are you OK? Is there anything I can do?

How - Show empathy - "I know you're feeling under a lot of pressure - is there anything you want me to do to help?"

p.s. they don't need any more pressure from you, (they get that from school and friends etc...) they need to want it for themselves and whilst they might do revision whilst you're standing over them, they won't when you're not, so you're allowed to enquire but don't keep on checking... otherwise they'll close down to everything you say.

2. They need to trust you...

How - Make sure that dinner time is family time. No awkward questions or pressure - just shared time. Spend time with them just because you can.

How - Be Vulnerable - share details with your kids about things that went wrong when YOU were young... kids think that you don't understand.

p.s. too often, they don't see that you were the same as them at their age, when you divulge things about you, they'll divulge things about them too !!!... but, you have to start it off and give it time... because they're learning to trust you... and that might take a while (it's normally more of an issue for 'them' and not so much about 'you' or what you've done)... so try not to take it personally... even though they are your kids.

3. Build their independence and sense of responsibility - let them make choices and be in charge...

How - Don't let your house be FREE !! - they have to make a contribution and do their 5-10 mins of chores every day... but, not for money !!

p.s. remember, you don't hire them, they are doing jobs as a privilege, for living in your house. If you make everything FREE, they'll treat it like it's 'worth nothing' and become ungrateful !!

p.s. Doing jobs builds their understanding about life and makes your life easier.... my 9 year old Millie is brilliant at emptying the tumble dryer & dishwasher...(I'm serious!)

How - Encourage them to do new things & give them freedom. If they want to go out, let them be in charge and let them be responsible about what time they're planning on coming back.... with your consent.

AND... if you both agree, then, you keep your promise, and they keep theirs. If they break their promise, then take away their freedom... and start again.

ps. It might go wrong to start with, but they'll learn what they really value and what they have to do to get it. If they keep their promises, then give them even more freedom.

p.s. my boy got grounded for two weeks last year, it was not what he wanted nor me... and his phone was removed on numerous occasions... but, things have changed since then !!

p.s. this is the hardest part of my relationship with my kids.

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4. Show them that you love them - no matter what !!

How - Telling kids you “love them” is something they can never get enough of...

How - Your love is not conditional - Don't tell them you'll love them IF....

Saying 'IF' - means you don't love them right now. You love them now and in the future, no matter what. You love them for who they are TODAY.

p.s. pay compliments, appreciate their clothing style or music (you don't have to actually like it !), they'll always seek approval and will want to make their parents feel proud, so don't make them feel needy & insecure... give them the love upfront.

5. Help them get their 'Big Picture'... inspire and lead them.

How - Get them to go to inspiring places that are different, take them to places outside of where they live ... eg. London, event, hobby show, theatre

p.s. I took my boy Jack into London last year and we had a glass of Coke in the hotel at St. Pancras station...(£4.50 - not cheap !) he started to speak about the people he saw around him, he started to get inquisitive and he started to ask questions, because he wanted to know what they did and how they got to be where they are today. It obviously got him thinking and he was trying to make sense of his 'Big Picture'. It was the best £4.50 I've ever spent !!...

How - Take an interest in them - if they're doing sport.... ask them how it's going, they might only respond with a few words to start with but it shows you care. Invite them and their friends to a sporting event.

p.s my boy Jack went to the Open Golf at Hoylake this year with his friend, Ben... he got up at 2.30am and his friends dad drove them to the event... he had the best day - & it was FREE for Under 16s. It inspired him and made him think more about life. Just making small steps is the only way they'll get there... they don't turn into motivated & focused people overnight... it's a sprint not a marathon !!

How - Take even MORE interest in them - if you know they like a certain kind of music - ask them whether they'd like to go to a rock concert? ... or an organised event.

p.s they'll be surprised you asked... and going to a concert is an amazing experience for anyone and you're helping them do what they want.

These 5 rules are priceless... and being the 'different' parent than I used to be, has opened my eyes and my kids eyes too. We talk more and fight less, we have more respect for each other and I actually 'like' my kids ... most of the time !!