

The Scoop on Parents: Connecting and Communicating

I am proud to say that I am an American Born Chinese (ABC). I am a typical first generation daughter. My mother is a seamstress and my father is a chef. Whether you were born in the United States or have emigrated from another country, you probably have differences with your parents. As a teen, I dealt with a lot of issues related to friends, schoolwork, stress, and the occasional crushes. Of course, most parents had similar experiences when they themselves were teens. However, it doesn't always feel that way. Though we all face obstacles to communicating with our parents, there are ways to overcome these obstacles and bridge the cultural and generational gaps, and build relationships with our parents.

At 12, I was ready to rule the world and did not care about who or what was in my way. I did what I wanted: watched movies, played handball, and spent time with my friends. My mother believed that going out late and spending time with friends would corrupt me and my future. I do not blame her since it is logical to think that way. Unfortunately, I gave her a hard time because I did not understand where she was coming from. There were countless arguments about my curfew, who my friends were, and how I would get home. I must admit that I did not handle the situations well. There were the occasional silent shoulder, disobeying the rules, and my tantrums. I did not understand why my mother was being unfair. I felt like she did not understand me. But as I grew older and wiser, I realized that I too was being unfair and did not try to understand her. My relationship with my mother has grown healthier now that I am more mature. However, I have grown

to realize that miscommunication and lack of communication between my mom and me during my teenage years prevented us from forming a healthy relationship.

Communicating with parents is not an easy task. Building communication is a two way street. It consists of respect, talking, listening, and most importantly compromising. It is important to respect your parent's values and beliefs even if they are not the same as your own. Initiating the conversation is also part of communication. You can ask your parents about their day and then dive into a subject that you have been meaning to talk to them about. When you want to get your points across, try using "I" statements. For instance, you could start a conversation with "I feel that...because...". Once you have voiced your opinion, it's important to *listen* and *understand* your parent's comments. Lastly, there is compromise. It is essential to establish a solution that makes both sides happy. If either party is unhappy, then there should be further conversation using "I" statements.

Although it is not always easy to relate to your parents, it helps to keep an open mind so that you can try to understand where your parents are coming from. Talking, listening to, and compromising with your parents will help you understand each other while at the same time help build a healthier relationship between the two of you. I remember many arguments I have had with my parents and I wished we shared our views and values with each other earlier. It is important to remember that our parents are doing their best to ensure our safety and well-being. By spending time with your parents and communicating with them, you can learn more about who they are and where they're

coming from. You will gain an opportunity to express your views while also showing them that you appreciate their concern.

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