5 Simple Steps How To Deal With A Defiant Teen

By Jamie Sullivan

Defiance is a common behavior in most teenagers, worse in some. Typically, when kids reach the teenage years, they are trying to establish independence. While being independent is a good thing, defiance is not. If you find you have a teen who continually acts out, challenging your authority, the following five steps will help. While a number of steps in dealing with a defiant teen are available, we have provided you with the ones in which we feel the strongest.

1. Choose your Battles - You need to understand that teenagers are going to act out from time to time. This type of behavior is a part of the growing process, similar to a baby bird trying its wings. Expect that throughout the teen years, you are going to be faced with numerous challenges, some major and some minor. If you choose your battles wisely, you are not constantly harping on your child about something but only the really, important things. This does not mean you have to accept back talk but know when to battle and when not to battle. Allow your child a little breathing room to experiment without going over the line.

2. Understand your Child - Of all these steps for dealing with a defiant teen, this one is extra important. It could be that your child is being defiant for a reason. For instance, he or she may be having trouble with another student or teacher at school, perhaps someone has said or done something inappropriately and your child does not know how to handle the situation. Instead of talking about it, the problem manifests in the form of defiance. Therefore, before you assume your teen is simply being difficult, make sure you know what is going on in his/her life.

3. Yes and No - Set the rules with your child, saying yes when you mean yes and no when you mean no - then sticking with the decision. Often, children will be defiant simply because they know they can get away with it. As the parent, you have to set some firm rules and keep to them!

4. Guidance - All teenagers need guidance. Without it, they are like fish out of the water, flopping around hoping they do okay. With a defiant teen, you cannot impose strict rules all at once, but if you add guidance in gradually and identify penalties, you will find your teen is more apt to adjust. Keep in mind that defiance in the form of hostile behavior is a desperate cry for help stemming from deep-seeded problems. Your child might be the victim of bullying or be considering some type of self-harm. With guidance, you are taking a huge load off the child that inside, is appreciated.

5. Activities - Of our final steps for dealing with a defiant teen, get your teenager involved with activities, with or without the family. Boredom is a common problem during teenage years so give him/her something to do. This could be through a program at school or an independent activity to include martial arts, dance, baseball, etc.