

# Strong Relationships with Teenagers, Episode 40



## Power of Moms A Gathering Place for Deliberate Mothers

In this episode, Saren and Shawni (from the popular [71toes.com](http://71toes.com)) share with us ways to make raising teenagers an experience that is both positive and fun. They help us find ways to ask good questions, to really listen, and to build them up as they are preparing to be launched into adulthood:

- **Watch your attitude.** Teenagers feed off our attitude towards them. Don't fall into the trap of negativity that society feels towards teenagers.
- **Communicate with them.** Explain things. Be someone that they feel comfortable coming to with things, both good and bad. When they get home, be open and available. Ask them a lot of questions.
- **Realize that every child is different.** There is not one set of keys to unlock the way to get your child to communicate with you. Instead, use the principle "If it's important to you, it's important to me" with each individual child. Do your homework so you can communicate with them in a way that is engaging to them.
- **Be Specific.** Conversation skills are sometimes lacking in our teenagers. To start the conversation, Shawni asks her kids to tell her 3 things that happened that day. It gives her a way to open up conversations with her children. Saren does something similar. She asks her children what did they do nice for someone and what did they learn that day. Having questions ready makes a huge difference and when they know the questions are coming they can prepare for them throughout the day.
- **Give Positive Affirmations.** Our teenagers live in a completely different world than we live in. It is so hard to help them navigate that. They need to feel like home is a sacred and safe place. Growing up, Saren and Shawni's dad would take their hands and write one thing they were good at on the tip of each of their fingers. This was a powerful way for them to receive positive affirmations. Always make sure your compliments are sincere.
- **Remember Physical Touch.** Children need an average of 8 physical touches from a parent every day. It doesn't have to be a full on hug, just a head ruffle, a pat on the back, or a high five!
- **One on One Conversation.** Have at least one eye ball to eye ball conversation every day with your teenager. Keep in mind that your child might do better with having a one on one conversation while doing something alongside you, such as driving in the car, emptying the dishwasher, or working on something together. Figure out what works best for your child. Just make sure your conversation is personal and individual.

- **Let your eyes light up.** There are 9 minutes in a day that are vital. The 3 minutes we first see them in the morning, the 3 minutes when we first see them after school, and the 3 minutes before we tuck them in bed at night. It important that that your eyes light up when they walk into a room.
- **Respect the things that are important to them.** Really listen to them. Kids have a tendency to want to tell us things at the worst time possible for us. Sometimes, in order to protect our relationship with them, we need to stop what we are doing and focus on our child. Every time you shut them down, they are less likely to bring something up again.

There are big things our children are learning to deal with, from social media to pornography. Shawni tells her kids that if they have something like this that they need to talk about, she will drop *anything* to talk to them. Sometimes it isn't possible to listen to all the little things they have to tell you, but make sure to listen to the big things. Remember the principle "If it is important to you it is important to me."

- **Pray.** Sometimes we are unable to figure out some of the very deep and heart wrenching parts of mothering teenagers. Remember that we have a parenting partner that is so much more knowing than we are and will help us through.

Shawni shares a quote that she loves on prayer:

"If we are to search for real light and eternal certainties, we have to pray as the ancients prayed. We are women now, not children and we are expected to pray with maturity. The words most often used to describe urgent prayerful labor are wrestle, plea, cry and hunger. In some sense, prayer may be the hardest work we ever engage in and perhaps it should be." (Patricia Holland)

- **Be Humble.** We need to be able to turn to God, our friends, and to family members for help. We also need to humble ourselves and apologize to our children. It makes our relationships with them more sincere and solid. When we take the time to tell them what is going on in our world they will see us as a person and not just a mother figure. They can realize we make mistakes to. They will see that this can go two ways. They can come to us for forgiveness and we can go to them for forgiveness. We can explain our situations to each other. When we can model this for our children we are giving them a gift. They can learn to handle things correctly when they do things wrong.

If a strong relationship is not in place, along with an ability to communicate and the ability to humble ourselves and to listen and know them, we can set any number of curfews and rules and they won't take it to heart.

The bottom line is to "LOVE MORE." Find out the best things about them and magnify them in everything that we do. Remember that when the going gets tough, love harder. Respond with love, deal with things with love, give them more compliments and build them up. That is the best discipline technique you can use.

*Transcribed by Mindy Thurston*