

# Managing Parents & Your Independence

Managing your relationship with your parents involves relating to them on a new, more mature level, while understanding both of your needs in this new stage in both your lives. The quicker you learn how to work with your parents the quicker you will earn independence! They will continue to treat you like a child until you act like an adult.

- **Act like an adult, not like a child.** Avoid fits, yelling, screaming, whining, or any of the like.
- **Meet them halfway.** Give a little to receive a little. Do things that will please them and they will do the same in return.
- **Seek to understand their point of view.** They are independent and therefore, probably have something to teach you about becoming independent!
- **Give up some “secrets”.** While you seek independence they still want to be sure that you are safe. Offer them some information in exchange for some privacy. Tell them your whereabouts preemptively so they don’t worry and phone you every hour on the hour!
- **Give thanks.** If they give you freedom, show their trust in you, or treat you with respect remember to say “thank you”. Let them know you appreciate being treated this way. In the process, you’re positively reinforcing them to continue this behavior!
- **If something is bothering you** about something they are doing, arrange a time to speak to them when you can approach the situation cool, calm, and collected. This will more likely ensure that you are listened to when emotions aren’t flying high.
- **Present any arguments you have clearly, calmly, and openly.** Take some time to think through your logic, and if you can, to think through their logic. Then decide how best to present you’re well-thought out request and rationale. This may not change their mind at first, but eventually they might start to listen to you and respect your independent thought!
- **Negotiate with them.** Teens don’t often get to negotiate with adults, but negotiation is a common practice in the adult world. Practice your negotiation skills with your parents. You can’t ask for a safer environment!



- **Ask for support.** If you need support from your parents on something, ask for it! They will be happy you did.
- **Ask their opinion.** This tells them you respect their wisdom to a large extent. Asking for your parent's opinion can shift the dynamic so that they start trusting that you will go to them when you need them (It can help offset the amount of times they offer their opinion when you aren't looking for it!).
- **Commit to gradual, sustainable change.** Remember, they have been parents of a child for a long time. Becoming a parent to an adult is a gradual process that won't happen over night, but will happen over time!

Gaining independence is about proving yourself to your parents. Demonstrate maturity so they understand that your thoughts, ideas, concerns and suggestions are to be considered. You're investing in them developing trust and respect for you as you become an adult and gain independence. It can be a fun learning process if you let it!

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