

Pastoral Spotlight (May) - Supporting Young People

I encourage parents approaching the teenage years for the first, second or third time to review the words given by advisors at 'The Centre for Parenting Education' who have compiled a 'top 10' list intended to offer support to parents with children at this vital stage of development.

WHAT ARE THE BEST WAYS FOR RAISING TEENAGERS?

Here are the **Top 10 Tips** for raising teenagers:

1. *Respect and listen to them.*
2. *Reward increasing maturity with more freedom.*
3. *Take away privileges if they can't handle the freedom.*
4. *Set clear and firm rules.*
5. *Hold them accountable – set and follow through with consequences.*
6. *Expect them to keep their word and you do the same.*
7. *Don't take difficult behaviours as a dare or challenge.*
8. *Accept that peers are an important influence.*
9. *Know that teens need you in their lives, but on their terms.*
10. *Continue to share your values.*

As teens move toward greater independence, they often rebel and resist parental rules. This requires parents to adjust some of their tried-and-true approaches that may have been effective when their kids were younger.

Changing some rules and giving more privileges as teens show better judgment are ways you can help them to slowly gain maturity.

Parents do best if they do not take their teens' actions as personal assaults on them, but rather if they think their kids are "just doing their job" of growing up.

Teens are rapidly changing and often their lives are filled with emotional, physical, intellectual, and social turmoil. Understanding this helps parents manage their child's new and rocky stage of development.

Remember that teens can be passionate, exuberant, fun, idealistic, and creative. Raising them can fill your life with the same.

Recently a few teachers at St Faith's took part in an online course regarding friendship turbulence amongst girls and I was fascinated to learn that, despite my best efforts, the stark reality is that:

'Adult intervention and strategies almost always do not work'

I also found out that the best thing a parent can do when girls come home and complain loudly about how they have been treated by their friends is:

'Listen but do not give advice unless it is asked for and do not think you can fix the problem'

The evidence and alternative approach was carefully outlined in the remainder of the course and we look forward to applying this new approach when helping girls to cope with friendship turbulence in school.

I recommend 'When Girls Fall Out' which is written by Andrew, Holly and Naomi Hampton and is described as 'A guide for parents of daughters told from the girls' point of view'. The book supports the work of 'Girls On Board', can be purchased via the website or Amazon and is a quick and succinct read.

I have also been introduced to a quarterly magazine called TEEN Breathe . You can subscribe to this publication by visiting teenbreathe.co.uk/subscribe or by calling 01273 488005. The next issue comes out on May 24th. The cover colour and image suggests that girls may find this most interesting but some of the articles are equally relevant for boys.

In the current issue some really varied topics are discussed ranging from how to navigate family holidays to neurodiversity and 'precious pollinators' . One article piqued my interest as it explores 'height'. This is something that many young people worry about as genes and puberty dictate how tall each person will grow and when that growing will start and stop. The author touches on aspects of height that will strike a chord with the reader, alluding to media and other external images and influences on perceptions of young people.

'Unfortunately these misleading images have a knock-on effect. They can make some boys worry that they're too short and some girls feel like they're too tall, which can affect self-esteem and confidence'.

Like many other articles this piece finishes with advice about where to go and what to do if you are seeking support or if this topic particularly resonates with you.

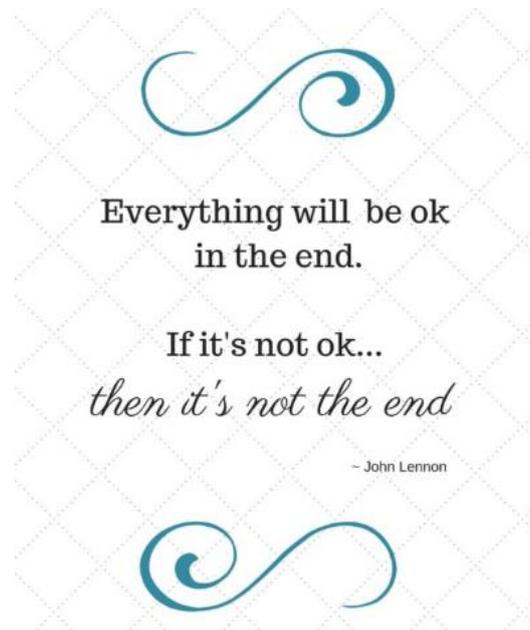
Another item entitled 'Pause before Sharing' outlines the potential problems of passing on information over social media;

'Not all information is factual , however, and a problem arises when people press 'share' without fully considering what they're reposting and what the consequences of this might be for others or themselves'

This article, as with the others I enjoyed in TEEN Breathe offered a mature opinion in a sophisticated format for young people to read and to consider, perhaps sharing a point of view held by parents but not easily accepted by their teenage children due to the suspicion that they might be being lectured. The printed version of such advice is welcomed by parents are absorbed less painfully by the reader.

The magazine has some spaces for the reader to write their own responses and have an outlet to order their thoughts. The magazine can be found in St Faith's library and is excellent reading for teens and parents.

In conclusion, if the journey of parenting teenagers is proving challenging, take comfort from the words of John Lennon:



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