# **How to Deal With Teenage Attitude**

**Source:** www.daniel-wong.com

**By:**Daniel Wong

How to deal with teenage attitude – that’s what so many frustrated parents want to know.

As someone who’s been [coaching teens](https://www.daniel-wong.com/coaching/) for years, I often speak with parents who are overwhelmed by their teenager’s attitude.

Since you’re reading this article, I’m sure you love your teens and want to set them up for success.

Yet almost everything you say or do elicits an eye-roll in response.

Do any of the following scenarios sound familiar to you?

Your teenagers hate school and don’t have [long-term academic goals](https://www.daniel-wong.com/2021/07/26/academic-goals/) (or other meaningful goals, for that matter). When you tell them that there’ll be no video games until they finish their homework, they storm off.

Or maybe you want to spend some family time together, but your teens prefer to use social media or watch videos instead.

And if you ask about your teen’s day? Well, you’re lucky if you get a three-word reply.

Knowing how to deal with teenage attitude is tricky. You don’t want to worsen the situation, but you’re also unwilling to tolerate disrespectful behaviour.

Here’s what you need to remember…

Your teenager’s attitude often has little to do with you.

Teenagehood is a tricky time. Teens are developing their sense of identity, yet they still feel powerless, confined by rules and schedules.

But here’s some good news:

While [parenting teens](https://www.daniel-wong.com/2021/12/04/parenting-teens/) is never easy, there are ways to learn how to handle teenage attitude – simple steps you can take today to improve your relationship with your teens and get through to them.

**7 ways to deal with teenage attitude problems**

Understanding your teen’s challenging behaviour can be emotionally overwhelming, but these proven tips will help:

### **1. Offer advice only if your teen is open to it**

As a parent, it’s hard to watch your teenagers struggle with their problems — especially when you know you can help.

After all, you’ve experienced a lot more than your teens have. If only they would listen to you, you could easily give them the solutions they need.

You want to support your teens to become [excellent students](https://www.daniel-wong.com/2016/04/18/top-student/) who lead meaningful lives. But they’re in the process of discovering their unique identity. They need to develop their own preferences and learn from their mistakes.

If your teenagers are open to it, you can still guide and coach them. But do your best to listen more and speak less.

Avoid forcing your opinion on your teenagers, even if you think you know what’s best for them.

They’ll be more inclined to share their thoughts and feelings with you (without the bad attitude) if you listen rather than lecture.

### **2. Set clear boundaries together with your teen**

If you want your teenagers to respect boundaries, involve them in the rule-setting process.

If you do this, they’ll see that you value and respect their feelings and opinions.

Now, the rules should seem reasonable to everyone in the family. You’re not letting your teens walk all over you, but rather you’re listening to their concerns and working together to create fair boundaries.

As far as possible, make the boundaries apply to you (as the parent) too. In my own family, I’ve found that my children are more willing to abide by the rules when they apply to me and my wife too.

When you set rules with your teens, they will be much more likely to go along with them.

And you know what’s even better? You won’t have to struggle with the issue of how to deal with teenage attitude.

### **3. Give your teen autonomy**

Does it feel like just a short while ago your teenager was a toddler?

Do you remember that small child who always wanted to spend time with you and relied on you for almost everything?

I don’t need to tell you how quickly kids grow up, so the process of raising independent grownups begins now.

Teenagers often feel like their lives are out of their control and that their freedom is always being limited.

They’re discovering their identity yet often feel frustrated by their lack of independence. This leads to poor behaviour and a poor attitude.

After all, teens who don’t feel right can’t act right.

So give your teens autonomy whenever you’re able to. This might mean compromising on the small things (like a hairstyle or fashion choice), but in return, you’ll have more energy for the things that matter.

Teens should have the final say with regard to most of the things going on in their lives, e.g. which subjects to take, which activities to participate in, how to complete a project.

### **4. Stay calm**

You politely ask your daughter to wash the dishes after dinner.

She [gets angry](https://www.daniel-wong.com/2022/04/11/how-to-handle-angry-teen/), says she doesn’t want to, then slams her bedroom door.

Your frustration starts to rise and you lecture her. How else should you deal with such teenage attitude?

Of course, rude and [disrespectful behaviour](https://www.daniel-wong.com/2018/03/19/disrespectful-teenager/) is never acceptable.

That being said, losing your temper will cause your teen to shut down or become defensive. It definitely won’t lead to a productive conversation about your teen’s inappropriate actions.

When you feel as if you’re about to lose your cool, take a few deep breaths.

Stay calm ([here are some good tips](https://www.mayoclinic.org/healthy-lifestyle/adult-health/in-depth/anger-management/art-20045434) to do that) and, if necessary, address the issue at a later time when both you and your teen have calmed down.

### **5. Spend quality time with your teen**

It might seem like your teenagers don’t want to spend time with you. It might seem like whatever you do or say is annoying to them.

Here’s the thing to keep in mind about dealing with teenage attitude…

Your teens crave your love and support, even if they don’t express it.

They might begin to feel neglected if it appears that their other siblings or your work or hobbies are more important to you than they are.

If they feel this way, their behaviour will get worse.

So set aside regular time to spend with your teen, and ensure that your teen is available at that time too.

Use these opportunities to show that you care about your teen and about his or her interests and hobbies.

Over time, your teen’s confidence and self-esteem will improve, and so will the parent-teen relationship.

Quality time doesn’t have to be extravagant. A walk around the neighbourhood or an afternoon out for ice cream is all it takes to demonstrate that you enjoy spending time with your teen.

And make sure to avoid lecturing or nagging during this quality time — quality time should be something you both look forward to!

### **6. Don’t take bad behaviour personally**

When it comes to how to deal with teenage attitude, it’s easy to feel like you’re not handling the situation well.

You want to help your teens take responsibility for their lives so they become successful, happy adults.

But all your teens do is complain, talk back to you, and question your authority.

It helps to remember that how they behave frequently has less to do with you and more to do with their developmental stage.

Their brains are changing. They’re learning how to express their heightened emotions while also discovering their identity.

That’s a lot to handle for a young person!

Again, I’m not saying you should condone bad behaviour. But when you realise that their attitude isn’t a personal attack directed at you, it will be easier to [communicate with your teen](https://www.daniel-wong.com/2022/06/14/communicating-with-teens/) clearly and effectively.

In turn, it’s more likely that you’ll be able to [get your teenager to listen](https://www.daniel-wong.com/get-teenager-to-listen/) to you.

### **7. Build your teen’s self-confidence**

You want to help your teens develop positive lifelong habits.

So, you offer constructive criticism. You tell your teens what they should be doing: studying more, cleaning up, eating healthily, reducing screentime…

While you’re trying to enable your teens to become more responsible, don’t forget to [say positive things to them](https://www.daniel-wong.com/2017/06/05/positive-things-to-say-to-your-children/), too!

[Research shows](https://www.owis.org/blog/the-value-of-reinforcing-positive-behaviour-for-our-teens) that recognising positive behaviour in teens promotes identity formation and moral reasoning.

I recommend practising descriptive praise instead of evaluative praise. ([Here are some examples](https://www.parentingforbrain.com/words-of-encouragement-for-kids/) of descriptive praise.)

By doing this, you’ll reinforce positive behaviour, build your teens’ self-confidence, and support habits for long-term success.

Plus, you’ll have more peace in your household, leading to fewer conflicts between you and your teens.

### **In closing…**

Knowing how to handle teenage attitude can be stressful and exhausting.

Start applying the tips outlined in this article, and keep persevering.

As time goes by, your family life will be more harmonious, and your relationship with your teen will improve too.