

# A MEDITATION FOR PARENTS OF TEENAGERS

My children are not my children. I will not hover.

I don't own them, their success or their failures.

I will not steal their mistakes or fix their failures, which belong to them, not me.

I have my own mistakes.

My children are not my friends.

They need me to parent them, not party with them.

My children are not my Promised Land.

They belong to themselves and to their futures.

I am not to blame for anything they do or become.

But I am responsible for helping them when they are in need.

I do not control them - their words or their actions.

But I control the values with which I raise them.

I will work hard to know who I am and what I stand for and will live true and close to my own deepest values.

But I will not shove my values or beliefs down my children's throats.

I will get on with the job of quietly being myself. I will offer words of advice and comfort when they are needed.

But I will not lecture.

I will live my values through my actions, not my words.

I will say 'I love you' and 'I'm sorry' often and easily so my kids learn that these words are the currency of robust intimacy.

I will not be bullied and I will not bully.

I will stand firm when I need to, and yield when the time is right.

When my children are in genuine danger, I will not stand by and watch them drown.

I will take right action when action is needed.

I will not beat myself up when I make mistakes - but will use them to figure out what I still need to know about myself.

I will open my heart to listen to what my kids say as well as to the silences between their words.

I will try to always be connecting with who they are.

I will be interested in their lives, but I will curb my curiosity.

I will fill my life with people, experiences and work that give my life meaning beyond my role as a parent.

I will remember that children - teenagers included - need attention.

Each day I will offer that attention so that my kids know I am there and that I have their backs.



I will strive to be kind to my kids, especially when they least deserve it.

I will muster compassion for what they are going through and for their struggles.

But I will not be stomped on or taken for granted.

I will command respect and I will respect them.

I will remember how lonely the teenage years can feel.

I will find ways to remind my kids that they are not alone.

I will not manipulate or guilt my kids into doing things my way. I will honour their emerging identities and respect our differences.

I will work hard to help them find their passion and will support them to hold onto their dreams.

I will help them to grow by giving them tasks and responsibilities so they can learn how hard work pays off.

I will give my kids their freedom tempered with accountability.

When they do stupid things, I will remember that I too was once a teenager.

I will rejoice in their happiness - even when it is not what I wish for myself.

My job is to prepare them to leave me, knowing they can always lean on me.

For now I am their lighthouse, their safe harbour when they need to come home.

But I cannot stop them from sailing in the direction their perfect hearts are taking them.

I cannot hold onto them, or save them.

The only person I can save, is me.

But I can love them and hold them in my heart.

I trust my children and I trust myself.

I have done enough.

When they leave, my life is not over.

It is just beginning.

This meditation is a companion to Joanne Fedler's book, 'Love in the Time of Contempt: consolations for parents of teenagers', (Hardie Grant, 2015)  
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