

WAYS

To Earn Your



TEENAGER'S Confidence

Culled from 'BRIDGING THE ADULT-YOUTH GAP' by Deji & Jadesola Adepeju

To get a youth to open up to you may not come easily because you are the authority figure over him/her, but when the youth respects you, it becomes easier. But how do we earn the respect? This is a major hurdle that we must cross.

Here are five ways to win your teenagers' respect and confidence

BE RESPONSIBLE

We need to be responsible parents to gain their respect. This can be done in various ways, for example when our attention is required in school, we should make efforts to be there instead of always delegating someone to go and represent us. Do your best to encourage their studies. Ensure that they leave home on time so that they can get to school on time. Ask about their lectures, discuss problematic subjects, buy their schoolbooks and avoid delay with the payment of their school fees. If we cannot afford a high fee paying school, let's send them to one where

the pay is affordable so that our child will not face embarrassment due to unpaid school fees. We should fulfil our parental obligations as a child feels secure when he knows his welfare is of primary importance to you.

BE AN EXAMPLE

It is very confusing for a child to be given an instruction that no one else follows except himself. You must be willing to let go of dishonourable character in yourself if you want your child to grow up as a wholesome fellow. Let them see your loyalty to God's word. Many a parent tells their children not to tell lies, but when they are in a difficult situation they say things that are not true to cover up.

This will make an impression on the child although he may just be a quiet onlooker at that time. If you go to the fuel station and the attendant gives you a change that you know is wrongly calculated in your favour but it was after you left the place that you discovered, would you return the excess change? If not, you are teaching him/her that dishonesty is approved in some instances. Your integrity must be clearly seen, if you are not straightforward, you cannot expect your child to be, for a cunning parent usually begets a cunning child.

BE APPROACHABLE

Being intimate is a goal every parent should pursue with their children. The children should be free to come to you with their problems without the fear that you will descend on them mercilessly with unkind words. The Bible says A man that hath friends must show himself friendly (**Proverbs 18: 24**). Learn to loosen up, let it not be

that you are always tensed up. It is possible that you have various challenges which if you are not careful will weigh you down, but when you are overworked you have a strong tendency to be irritable or touchy. It becomes difficult for you to respond when your teenagers need your attention. If this becomes a frequent occurrence, they may feel that you are indifferent and may conclude that you don't have a genuine affection for them. The Bible enjoins us to always rejoice in **Philippians 4:4**, so, make effort to be fun to live with and learn to laugh.

Give them a treat when they least expect it. You may take them out for a special lunch or dinner at a nice restaurant. It sends the message that Mum and Dad are not only interested in do's and don'ts but also in us.

INVOLVE THEM IN DECISIONS THAT AFFECT THEM

We should let our teenagers feel that they are important members of the family by involving them in major decisions especially ones that concern them. For example if you are considering a change of job that would mean relocating the entire family to another place, it has implications on them, we need to inform them and let them follow us through in the decision making process. But if we do not, if it is after you have changed jobs and have just a few days to the time that the entire household should move that you inform them, it can breed resentment because you have not given them opportunity to break their own ties with their friends.

BE KNOWLEDGEABLE

Make efforts to be knowledgeable in things that involve them, if not they will just classify you as a novice who does not understand simple issues. So, when they have challenges, they won't even consider coming to you for counselling because they will feel you can't understand. For example in present day Nigeria, many of the youths classify the older generation as BBC which means born before computer.

However, though born before the computer age we should make efforts to know how to use it and how some of the social networks are used. At times, we can even ask them to teach us some of these things so that we can communicate on the same level. We should also take time to listen to news and know what is happening in the environment. So that we can help them apply whatever we are teaching them to everyday life's events.

KEEP THEIR CONFIDENCE

As we seek better communication with our children, they want to be reassured that they are in safe hands with us and we can keep their confidence. If a child tells us something and the next time our friend comes and he overhears that it is exactly what he told us that we are telling the person, he will be careful the type of information he releases to us next time. Also, don't crowd them; don't insist they tell you everything that happens. Our aim should be that they come to us willingly to share and not out of duress. When you don't give him room, he may start resenting your presence and feel that you are crowding him

PRAY REGULARLY FOR THEM

When we pray and receive answers to our prayers, it fills our heart with joy not just because we got what we asked for but also because God responds to our requests. Beyond our own joy, when these teenagers see that God honours your requests, they will respect you perhaps because it makes a quietly deep impression on them that your God is not only real but that you know Him, He knows you and He is real to you.

The other day a youth left our house at about 9pm. Though, it was not his first time of our house late, but we felt an urge to pray for him. Daddy responded to the urge and prayed that God's mercies will take him home safely. When he left our home, some cultists surrounded him and they were going to hack him with long knives because they mistook him for a member of a rival cult whom they were looking for. As one of them raised along knife, his colleague stopped him and said "this is not the guy we are looking for". The following morning the young man came to tell us what happened and he attributed his deliverance to the fact that daddy prayed for him before he left us.



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