



## HOMESCHOOLING HIGH SCHOOL WITH MEREDITH!

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### FINISH WELL WITH COMMUNICATION

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*"Hi, Mom. How was your meeting?"*

*"Well, it didn't go quite as I had planned?" I answered my middle daughter, Jenny-Rose, a senior in high school.*

*"I'm so sorry," she replied empathetically. "What happened?"*

*"If you don't mind, I don't want to rehash it. Needless to say, there were several people who did not see eye to eye and the meeting had many awkward moments."*

*"Can I pray for you?"*

*"Yes, thank you, Rosie. Please!"*

Yes, this is a real conversation that took place in our home. My Rosie is gentle and sweet, noticing when I need some encouragement. When she is discouraged, we talk and I pray for her. I have four daughters and we all pour our hearts out to one another. There is always one of us girls who needs to talk and another who is willing to listen.

I love having daughters who encourage my dreams and understand my moods. But, my son and I talk too. Usually late at night. We discuss his goals, plans, and dreams. Sometimes we talk about a girl that he thinks is pretty or troubles he is having with a friend.

Mostly though, our family laughs and jokes around together. We can be so silly at times. Katie Beth and Julianna have every Veggie Tale song memorized and somehow, one of these songs always perfectly fits into a conversation we are having. If I ask about my hairbrush, Julianna will sing, "Where is my hairbrush...Oh, where is my hairbrush?"

Strong relationships are built upon healthy communication. How can we improve communication with our teens?

### PLACE A TENT ON THEIR FOREHEAD



"Place a ten on their forehead," Pastor Mike was explaining. "Let people know that on a scale of one to ten, they rate a ten in your eyes. When you look at your children, picture a ten on their forehead."

Laura had a puzzled look on her face.

"Is something wrong?" my husband asked.

"Well, I understand your point, but I don't see how picturing a tent on Zack's forehead will help me value him more," Laura answered referring to her son.

We all laughed and, to this day, we speak of putting a tent on someone's forehead.

Place value on your teens! Let them know that they are A-#1 in your eyes. Remind them over and over of how much joy and blessing they bring to your life.

### SPEAK RESPECTFULLY TO YOUR TEENS

Treat your teens with respect as people. Thank them, apologize to them, and honor them whenever it is appropriate to do so. Try saying, "Would you please take out the garbage?" instead of "Are you ever going to get this garbage out?" Talk to your children they way you would talk to friends that you really admire.

Respect is really a heart issue. No matter how hard we try to cover it up and how good of a job we think we are doing, teens can always tell when you are frustrated with them. The only way to overcome frustration and anger is to go to the Lord and keep praying until His love floods your soul!

### **CONTROL YOUR VOICE LEVEL**



Remove yelling and screaming from your speech patterns. If you are angry, leave the room and pull yourself together before you speak.

"Shine, I am really angry right now. I need to go pull myself together. Then, I will be back and we will settle this," I explained to my daughter, closing her bedroom door behind me. I was ready to let her have it with both barrels blazing.

I wish I could take back every word I have ever yelled at my children or even spoken in anger. They have had absolutely no positive effect on them. In fact, these words have caused destruction. I wish I was a perfect mom, but I have not been. I have had to apologize many times for losing my temper or storming around the house in a snit, muttering.

In fact, my children love to imitate me, when I the mess of the house finally gets to me. "This house is a PIT!"

But more often than not, I have learned to bite my tongue (sometimes so hard that it bleeds) and use the self-control God has supplied by His Holy Spirit.

Screaming is a lack of self-control and can lead to worse things such as belittling or name-calling. Don't fall into the devil's trap.

### **SET ASIDE TIME FOR CONVERSATION**

Make time to relax and visit with your teens, as if they were valued friends. It is worth the money to "date" your teens with trips to Starbucks or Steak and Shake to just talk. Ask questions and listen attentively. Share transparently from your own life (without burdening your teens with marriage issues and other problems).

Make it your goal to get to know your teenagers as friends that fill your life with joy. Contrary to popular belief, every teen longs to be close to his/her parents. Make time for this to happen. Your cup of joy will overflow!