

BEYOND "FINE"

OPENING THE DOOR TO TALKING WITH YOUR TEEN

Does your teen say "Fine" or "Nothing" when you ask even the most basic questions? About three in ten adolescents communicate well with their parents. Many teens find it hard to talk to adults, and parents get frustrated trying to find meaningful answers to questions like, "How was school today?" or "What are your plans for the weekend?"

Try this:

Communication is an age-old dilemma between teens and parents.

- Ask a few unusual questions. Sometimes this brings out stories a teenager normally wouldn't talk about. For example:
"If you could change one thing about yourself, what would it be?" How would that change affect your life?"
"If you could invent a holiday, what would it be? What traditions would it include?"
"In what ways do you wish you had more freedom?"
- Sit back and wait for awhile. Give your teen a chance to answer. Ask follow-up questions or provide open-ended responses to keep the conversation going.



Try:

"That's interesting. Tell me more."

"You've really thought about this haven't you?"

"Have you always thought this way?"