

The Purpose of Parenting

The approach to parenting presented in this book is called “active” in contrast to what parents often do, which might be called “reactive.” Reactive parenting is characterized by waiting until teens push parents to their limits, and then reacting with random discipline. This parenting style is usually fraught with frustration, anger, and escalating conflict. Reactive parenting unwittingly allows teens to control situations as well as parents’ emotions. Instead of preventing or solving problems, this approach allows problems to continue, or even get worse, as parents and teens replay the same painful scenes over and over.

The philosophy of *Active Parenting of Teens* is that it is the job of the parent to play the leadership role in the family; however, this is not a simple matter of laying down the law. Effective leadership in any organization, from a business to a family, is a matter of having the right attitudes and skills.

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It involves:

- proactively anticipating and preventing problems.
- developing mutually respectful relationships.
- enforcing fair discipline.
- maintaining effective communication.
- using productive problem-solving methods.
- encouraging the participation and success of everyone involved.



This book will cover these skills and other parenting methods that I have adapted from the work of great psychologists such as Alfred Adler and Rudolf Dreikurs and organized into the Active Parenting method. Incidentally, parents have told me that

Family Meeting and Family Enrichment Activity: Taking Time for Fun

Remember when...

Describe something fun you did with your parents when you were a teenager. _____

How did you feel about your parent at that moment? How did you feel about yourself? _____

Make a list of activities that you think would be fun to do with your teen. Add to the list as you discuss this topic at your family meeting. List the pros and cons of each activity.

| Activity | Pros | Cons |
|----------|------|------|
| 1. | | |
| 2. | | |
| 3. | | |
| 4. | | |
| 5. | | |

THE PROBLEM-HANDLING MODEL

Anticipate and prevent problems through problem-prevention talks and family meetings



If a problem does occur, determine who owns the problem:
(parent, teen, or both)

Parent-owned

Shared

Teen-owned



Provide discipline.



Provide discipline and support.



Provide support.



Less-structured Discipline Approaches:

- Polite requests
- "I" messages
- Firm directions

More-structured Discipline Approaches:

- Logical Consequences
- Active problem-solving
- FLAC method



If appropriate, allow natural consequences to teach.



Let the teen handle the problem, but offer support through active communication.



Refer the problem to a family meeting



And no matter who owns the problem: encourage, encourage, encourage!

- Keep it fun! Don't use this time for confrontation.
- Use the chart on page 37 to help plan the activity.

Use this family enrichment activity and the support skills you've learned on a regular basis and watch how your relationship with your teen blossoms. If your teen is frequently out of control, this may be a way to begin making positive contact. Be creative. And reach out.

Family Meeting: Choosing a Fun Family Activity

The Active Parenting model is designed to augment family life in a democratic society, where everyone may not get their way, but they always get their say. By holding family meetings, you can help prepare your children to survive and thrive in this society, teaching them the “give and take” that comes with cooperative problem solving and decision making. That is why we will present a family meeting at the end of each chapter.

We recommend that you use your first family meeting to decide what to do together for your family enrichment activity. Try to keep it informal and brief, and be careful not to turn this or any family meeting into a confrontation. This should be an enjoyable time during which everyone has his or her voice heard and their wishes considered. Stay upbeat and encouraging as much as possible and you will find that family meetings are a great benefit to parents and children alike—even teenagers.

