

Parenting Adolescents

Every generation complains about teenagers. At least since the 1950's, parents have lamented that "this is the worst they've ever been". Then those teenagers grow up and complain themselves.

The interesting thing is that, in traditional parenting, we approach parenting teenagers the same way, it never works, and then we complain when it doesn't. It is healthy and "normal" for teenagers to manifest oppositional behaviour. If they did not go through this developmental stage they would not progress to adulthood. But it doesn't have to bring with it conflict and extreme acting out behaviours that only happens because of how parents respond.

In our culture, human beings need to go from being totally dependent children at age 12 to completely independent adults at age 18. That's a lot of change in a short time, and in the search for their own rules, values, direction, teenagers first challenge the existing paradigms of their family and of society. This is a really good and really healthy thing that is welcomed and celebrated in alternative parenting.

If parents have been using alternative parenting before adolescents, there is often a smooth and happy transition, as parents get to watch, and celebrate, their young person taking control of his or her own life. By supporting this process instead of trying to direct it, parents can keep the lines of communication open and continue to "parent" right through the most difficult issues of adolescence, such as drugs and sex.

NOTES

Maleny Office
2/11 Coral Street
Maleny QLD 4552

Caloundra Office
58A Queen Street
Caloundra QLD 4551

Lawnton Office
865 Gympie Road
Lawnton QLD 4501