



## What are you REALLY saying?

**"As a parent, it is always good to remember that your actions and attitudes can speak louder than your words."**

One of the most difficult challenges parents face on a daily basis is communicating with their teen. At times, you might honestly feel that you speak two different languages. It is also in those moments that frustrations come out in words AND in actions. As a parent, it is always good to remember that your actions and attitudes can speak louder than your words. With this in mind, here are some things to think about as you work hard to better communicate with your teen. First and foremost, you must focus your attention on your teen. Stop reading the newspaper or watching TV. Go to a place where there are no distractions and totally focus on the conversation. Second, be aware of your facial expressions. You might not even know you are doing this, but a raised eyebrow or headshake will automatically trigger the "defense" mechanism in your teen. If you don't know you do this, ask someone you trust who will tell you the truth. Don't respond with sarcasm. One-line "witty" zingers are not appropriate and only teaches your teen to respond like this in other situations. Make a conscious effort to not interrupt your teen while they talk. Allowing them to finish their thoughts shows them respect, and hopefully, will teach them to allow you to finish yours when it is your time to respond. Listen to what your teen is saying. Instead of trying to understand their point of view, many parents start formulating in their heads what they are going to say next. Stop doing this, and start listening! If a conversation is getting too heated, take a break. This break will allow time and space, giving each of you another chance to talk. Every word spoken to your teen is so important. Pray that your next conversation is one that begins and ends honoring the Lord and each other.

**Below is a great skill to master as you continue to learn how to effectively communicate with your teen:**

Since one of the main components of communication is listening, try to use **Door Openers** instead of **Door Closers**. Door Openers are open-ended responses that do not convey evaluation or judgment, while Door Closers are just the opposite. Here are some examples of both:

**Door Openers:**

- \* What do you think?
- \* That's a good question.
- \* Do you know what that means?
- \* That sounds important to you.
- \* I'm interested in what you are saying.

**Door Slammers:**

- \* You are too young to understand.
- \* If you say that again, I'll...
- \* I don't care what your friends are doing!
- \* You don't need to know about that.
- \* Don't come to me if you mess up.



**KQED.org polled teens and adults on how well each group communicated with the other. Here are just some of their findings:**

Statement: "Parents have good communication with their teens."

Teens response:

- 22% - Agree
- 78% - Disagree

Adult response:

- 52% - Agree
- 48% - Disagree

Statement: "Teens feel comfortable talking to their parents."

Teens response:

- 21% - Agree
- 79% - Disagree

Adult response:

- 53% - Agree
- 47% - Disagree

## The Parent POV

(point of view)

**The ability to communicate is important for every member of your family. If it has been a while since you sat down and had a conversation with your teen, here are some questions that just might "break the ice":**

1. What was the high point and low point of your day?
2. When would be the best time each day for us (Mom and/or Dad) to have a conversation with you?
3. What is ONE thing I can do to help make it easier for us to have a quality conversation on a more frequent basis?
4. Is there anything I can pray about in your life right now?

\* NOTE: Get in the habit of asking open-ended questions. Don't allow them to just give you a "yes" or "no" answer anymore.



## Focus on Prayer

### Pray that:

1. God will help your family find moments throughout the day that will allow each of you to interact and talk to each other.
2. God will give you better understanding on what your teen needs to open the lines of communication.
3. You will make your family a major priority this week.
4. God will give you patience and wisdom in how you listen and respond while talking to every member of your family.

### Verse of the month

**"My dear brothers, take note of this: Everyone should be quick to listen, slow to speak and slow to become angry, for man's anger does not bring about the righteous life that God desires."** James 1:19-20 (NIV)

This is great advice in dealing with any circumstance. In today's society though, it seems this verse does not apply within the confines of the family unit. It is easy to quickly respond with programmed responses such as "Because I am the parent!", or "You just don't understand...you are just unreasonable!" Have you ever thought that if we took God's advice by responding to our family like James states, we would have much better communication in our homes? If we would just be quick to listen, this would eliminate a lot of disagreements that happen on a daily basis. The next conversation you have with someone in your family, remember to listen, think before speaking, and keep your cool. The outcome of this conversation will be refreshing, uplifting, and honoring to each other and to our Lord.



### Did you know...

- \* Teens who have strong emotional attachments to their parents are much less likely to become sexually active at an early age. (etr.org/recapp)
- \* 61% of parents say they talk frequently to their children about values and beliefs, but only 41% of teens report such conversations. (naperymca.org)
- \* The majority of parents (57%) express some degree of difficulty in getting their teen involved in a meaningful conversation on topics like who their friends are, how they dress, how school is going, and what they worry about. (mediacampaign.org)
- \* Only a quarter of parents (26%) say their teen listens to their concerns and that they get into a deeper discussion with a full exchange of views. (mediacampaign.org)

## Music alternative

This Oregon native, Paul Wright, began his spiritual journey at age 12 when he gave his life to Christ at a Billy Graham crusade. He says, "Immediately after coming to know the Lord, I got a vision to use my gifts, specifically singing about God, sharing my heart through music." He attended Northwest Christian College on a basketball scholarship, but still pursued music. Shortly after graduation, he met TobyMac with Gotee Records and was quickly signed. He encourages others by saying, "when we realize our identity in Christ, we'll have the ability to walk in the power of the Spirit...God called us to be able to fly." christianitytoday.com

## trends

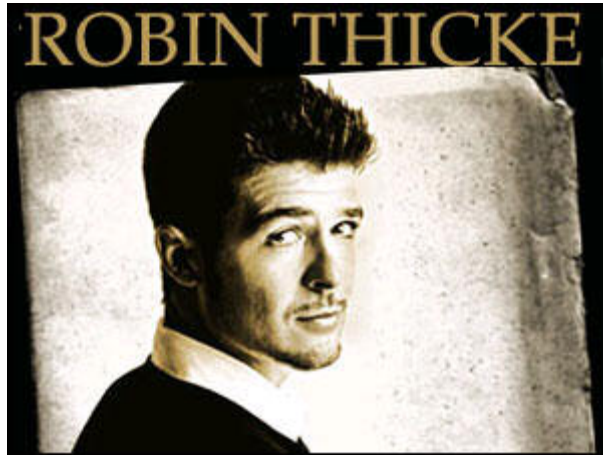
### Cnnmoney.com shows some interesting trends in the way teens communicate with peers:

Mobile operators raked in \$70 billion in text messaging revenues worldwide last year.

46% of online teens choose IM over email as preferred method of communication with friends.

Nearly two-thirds of teen owners of cell phones use text messaging.

## musicspotlight



### Albums:

"The Evolution of Robin Thicke" -10/2006 (Deluxe Edition 2/2007)

"Beautiful World" - 4/2003

**Background:** Grammy Award winning, "singer/songwriter, Robin Thicke, was one of the few to define the new millennium's blue-eyed soul movement." Son of vocalist Gloria Loring and TV actor Alan Thicke, Robin was raised in the suburbs of Los Angeles during the 80's and 90's. Though he was an average student, he began writing songs at 13. He eventually wrote songs for Christina Aguilera, Mya, Brandy, Marc Anthony, and Jordan Knight. He wanted his chance for stardom and released his debut album in 2002. He collaborated with Pharrell Williams and Star Trak Records for his next album release that is gaining much recognition.

**What Parents Should Know:** Thicke's latest album contains foul language, is very sexual in nature, and has numerous references to alcohol, drugs and crude sexual acts.

**Parent/Teen Q&A:** In a recent interview, Robin stated, "I definitely had a rough time over the last year. Life is full of constant ups and downs, and all I ask for is redemption in the end."

Q: What does the word "redemption" mean to you? Do you have to wait "to the end" to find redemption? If not, then where can we find redemption?



## filmwatch

Beware of the horror and violence in films that release this month.

TITLE	RATING	RED FLAGS	GENRE	STARRING
Vacancy	R	For brutal violence and terror, brief nudity, and language	Drama/Horror	Kate Beckinsale, Luke Wilson, Frank Whaley, Ethan Embry
The Invisible	PG-13	For violence, criminality, sensuality and language - all involving teens	Drama, thriller	Justin Chatwin, Marcia Gay Harden, Maggie Ma, Michelle Harrison
Kickin' It Old School	R	For crude and sexual content and language	Comedy	Jamie Kennedy, Christopher McDonald, Miguel A. Nunez, Maria Menounos