



## Parenting

*One of life's greatest pleasures as well as its greatest challenges*

Parenting can be one of life's greatest pleasures, as well as one of its greatest challenges. Like every human relationship the parent-child relationship embraces two distinct points of view. Teenagers, however articulate they may be in other areas, can be notoriously inarticulate when it comes to putting forth their own perspectives, needs and purposes to their parents. During this time of dramatic and perplexing change, teenagers often have difficulty understanding their own inner states and behaviours. At the same time, parents frequently share the confusion and turmoil of teenagers. You may well misread or misunderstand your teenager's communications. Frequently you may find yourself at a complete loss in terms of what your teenager is communicating and how you are to respond.



So get ready to make a shift in your parenting role. Your role of parent as manager is coming to a close and your new role of parent as coach is emerging. In your new role you take on a new way of "being". After all, we are human beings not human doings! It is time to stop doing things the old way and become the parent coach. A coach is not a cheerleader, but one who helps an individual explore his or her potential and supports them in moving onto bigger and better things. A parent coach does not try to control their teenager, instead they learn to really listen to them, support their interest and show we appreciate their uniqueness. As a parent coach you can teach your teenager that they have a choice in the design of their life. You can show them how to clarify their values, how to "choose to choose" and how to take responsibility for their actions.

Carl Jung once said "Consciousness is not achieved without pain." Raising a teenager provides numerous opportunities for leaps of consciousness. And this is difficult, but worth remembering, when your teenager's room is empty at 2.00am., when the phone isn't ringing, when the deputy principal is asking for a meeting, when you are buying a dress for the formal, when you are not buying a dress for the formal, after you have found an empty beer can in the car. When all is said and done, they need and want you as allies, not enemies, during this confusing and vital phase of life.

*"Thinking is easy, acting is difficult, and to put one's thoughts into action is the most difficult thing in the world."*

*Johann Wolfgang von Goethe*