



## Common parenting traps

### *Identifying, avoiding and escaping traps*

Parenting adolescents is not an easy task for either the parent or the adolescent! It is a time of dramatic physical, social, emotional and cognitive change for adolescents. This brings a whole new set of challenges. This month we will look at some of the common parenting traps or pitfalls that can occur during this exciting time in the teenager's life.

**The Criticism Trap** - This is the trap of fault finding. You fall into this trap when you focus on your teens weaknesses or mistakes. Try not to be judgemental, ask yourself are you realistic in your expectations? Catch them doing something right instead.

**The Escalation Trap** - This occurs when members of the family use negative behaviour such as nagging, yelling or tantrums to get what they want. It is usually the parent that is able to stop this cycle of behaviour. Try to have an agreement around responsible behaviour.

**The "Because I say so" Trap** - You have fallen into this trap when you demand instant and unquestioning obedience based on purely your authority as a parent. This can usually be avoided by determining if it needs to be done "now". Usually not - so making a respectful agreement about when it can be done encourages responsible behaviour.

**The "Taking it personally" Trap** - Parents and teenagers find themselves arguing over things that once did not cause concern. Parents assume these changes mean that their teen no longer loves or cares about them. Do not take it personally - it is often a normal part of growing up.

**The "You're doing it on purpose Trap"** - You are caught in this trap when you assume that your teen is doing something just to annoy you. Teens are rarely motivated by the desire to deliberately upset their parents. Your thinking requires some change - and don't take it personally

**The Martyr Trap** - this is the trap of focussing on your teenager's needs at the expense of your own. You do need time to rest, unwind, and do things that are important to you.



*"You control your emotions, so you do not have to explode with anger whenever someone else decides to behave in angry ways."*

*Dr. Wayne Dyer*