



## Is honesty the best policy?

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*What should we tell the kids?*

One day you'll be sitting on the couch with your teenager watching TV and a controversial issue about drugs, sex, alcohol or breaking the law comes on. And then, your teenager will start to ask questions. What did you do when you were younger? How often?

While some might consider leaving the room, closing down the conversation or simply lying, the best idea is to have a plan on how to best handle this situation.

While honesty with your kids is important it is also necessary to be aware of their maturity level and their readiness to hear. Some kids just aren't ready to hear that you had sex with someone else before you married your partner!

Following are some strategies you can use when faced with these difficult questions:

**1. Only speak about your past when asked.** No need to go into past transgressions. But be ready with responses as the questions can come at any time.

**2. Tell them you'll talk about it at a later date if you don't think they are ready for it.** Better to be honest and tell them about it later.

**3. Tell them as little as they need to know.** They don't need to know specific details of what you did or how many times! Don't give them the message that, "I did these things, and look how well I'm doing now!" This is a clear message to your kids that doing these things can work for them, too.

**4. Gather the lessons learned from your experience and relay that to your teenager.** Be careful not to preach to them. Whether you speak about your own experiences, or just talk about the perspective you now have as an adult, let them know the risks associated with the behaviours.

**5. When your child asks about your past, find out the reason they're asking.** Is it something they're experiencing at school, or do they just want to find out some "secrets" about their parents? More often than not, your child is seeking some guidance on this issue, and would like to share your experience. Ask them directly about what's going on, but ask in a way that shows concern, not in a way that accuses them.

So tell them the truth. Just tell them as little as they need to know, and tell them when they're ready.

*" Do not be afraid of making mistakes, but do be afraid of making the same mistake. "*

*Tautze*