

You Might Be A Helicopter Parent If...

A companion guide to episode #14
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Teens

YOU MIGHT BE OVERPARENTING IF

Below is a list of common “signs and symptoms” of overparenting. Read and think about each one carefully. Be truthful with yourself. Do any of them sound like you? If so, you should consider taking a step back to provide your teen the opportunity to learn a little independence before launching into the "real world".



Does any of this sound like you?



You find yourself engaging in constant power struggles

You argue with your teen over things that are not "life or death" issues. For example, arguments over clothes, hair, makeup, or other matters of taste, opinion, passion, or creativity.

You can't stand back and let them struggle or fail

You get anxious and worry about the outcome. For example, you offer help with homework without being asked, you offer unsolicited friendship or relationship advice, you can't keep your opinions to yourself about how to improve their golf swing.

You're anxious about letting them do age-appropriate things

You worry about what could happen. For example, letting your 12-year-old walk 2 blocks to the store with a group of friends or letting your 14-year-old ride to school in the morning with a 16-year-old neighbor, or letting your 17-year-old attend an outdoor concert an hour away.

You've already chosen their college and career path

You're not going to leave such important decisions to them. You know what's best for their future and know how to make it happen. They'll end up liking it just fine.



You feel anxious or angry if your teen doesn't meet your expectations

Do you demand a certain level of achievement (without regard for their desire for that achievement) for example, they make any grade lower than an A, they don't make 1st chair or 1st string or meet any other standard of perfection or near perfection.

You ask others bend the rules for your teen

Do you often ask teachers, coaches, even grandparents to treat your teen according to a different set of rules or to bend the rules for them? For example, arguing with a teacher about a grade, asking the coach for extra time on the field, asking grandparents not to buy certain gifts, etc.

You intervene when your teen has a conflict

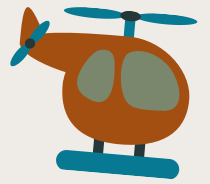
Perhaps you can't stand to see them hurt, sad, angry, so you step in to speak with whomever has hurt or angered them. You know if you could just talk to them everything would be okay. For example, a romantic interest, a friend, a boss, a coach.

Your expectations don't match their age and development

Perhaps you get angry when they can't seem to manage extracurriculars, homework and family time (are you expecting too much?) Or perhaps you complete homework or class projects for them because you just don't trust them to do it correctly (are you expecting too little?)

You often make choices for them

You leave little up to them. You want to make sure it's "right". For example, their extracurriculars, class schedule, clothes, haircut...things they have the ability to decide for themselves...decisions that are personal choices and not "life and death".



You demand their obedience

You make all the household rules without any input from your teen. These rules are non-negotiable and if broken, carry a punishment that may or may not have been discussed in advance and may or may not have any logical connection to the rule broken.

You worry about their future

You tie their current habits as a teenager to their future life success. For example, you worry they'll never be motivated to study, they'll always be messy, never be on time anywhere, never be able to get out bed for college classes or work, etc.

You make sure they stay up with the "competition"

You don't want them to be out-of-the-loop or "not keeping up". For example, if other kids are taking the SAT course in 9th grade, yours will too. If they're taking it twice, so will yours. If they've hired a tutor...well, you get the idea.

You could pass all of their quizzes and exams yourself

You're doing prep work for your teen, outlining notes, making flash cards in Quizlet, in Google Classroom every single day. You have a study schedule for them to follow each week and you sit down with them to make sure they know every single answer.

You haven't assigned age-appropriate chores

They have no household responsibilities beyond eating, sleeping, studying, video games and phone time.



You have few interests outside of your teen/kids

You devote almost 100% of your time to kids and house. You rarely go out with girlfriends, have no hobbies, you may occasionally go to the gym or do yoga but that's about it...it's just family all the time. You don't know what you'd do with yourself otherwise.

You'd be devastated or angry if they told you they wanted to quit

if they came to you and said they no longer enjoyed the sport, the instrument, or activity you've spent years investing time and money into, you'd be crushed and you'd fight their decision all the way.

You talk more than you listen

When they break a rule, make a big mistake, or they're angry, anxious, or disappointed about something, you jump in with a lecture, speech, or advice before listening to what they have to say about it.

Sources:

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Hey there!

I'm Ann Coleman and struggled parenting my son during his teen years. After turning things around, I continued studying the science of adolescence and of parenting adolescents. I made the switch from attorney to parent educator and podcaster to help you avoid the mistakes I made.

What's contained in this Guide are just some of things you'll learn in **PARENT CAMP** to strengthen the relationship with your teen, decrease the conflict and improve their behavior. Check out the **PARENT CAMP** membership and learn about the course, the weekly meetups with me, the monthly expert Q & As with subject matter experts who cover everything from drug use to self-harm, and the community forum, weekly challenges, and more.

Ann Coleman



Speaking *of* Teens



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