

# THE TEEN COMMANDMENTS FOR PARENTS

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## 1. THOU SHALT GET THY ACT TOGETHER AND BE CONSISTENT

Consistency is the heart and soul of effective parenting. Your inconsistency teaches your teen to misbehave. Teens need to know what to expect. No meaningless "threats," no false promises, no random discipline. Mean what you say, say only what you mean and follow through!

## 2. THOU SHALT BE INDIVISIBLE (Not to be confused with invisibility or birth control)

Solidarity between parents (even if divorced) is a must. Teens are expert at singling out the weaker parent or playing one against the other. It's "united we stand, or divided we fall." Don't be uncool and fight about the teen or his issues in front of him—he'll feel responsible or see one of you as the hero and one as the villain. Do your negotiating behind closed doors.

## 3. THOU SHALT LET CONSEQUENCES BE THE HEAVY

Consequences, not bossy parents, are what makes a teen responsible. They are extremely powerful tools to change or modify behavior. Responsibility can't be taught; it must be given. Consequences can be a payoff for rebellion or an almighty deterrent.

## 4. THOU SHALT LOVE AND RESPECT THY TEENAGER AS THYSELF

Your teen is a separate person of equal human worth, not chattel. Treat him the way you'd want to be treated or at least as good as your friends. They who are not busy fighting are busy not fighting (*enjoying each other*).

## 5. THOU SHALL ACCEPT THY PARENTAL LIMITATIONS

Change what you can or should change, and accept what you can't change (or control). And pray you'll be wise enough to distinguish which is which for your teen's sake and your own. (*Think of the money you'll save on aspirin and antacids!*)

## 6. THOU SHALT NOT COVET THEY TEENAGER'S RESPONSIBILITIES AND PROBLEMS

It's enough of a hassle to run one life (your own) much less to try and run your teen's life, too. Your duty to yourself and your teen is to allow him to become increasingly responsible for the consequences and headaches of running his own life.

## 7. THOU SHALT NOT PRETEND TO BE INFALLIBLE

Who are you kidding? You're human. You know it, and your teen knows it. Make your mistakes but be a role model. Own up to mistakes and apologize. Your teen will admire you and overlook your flaws (hopefully)!

## 8. THOU SHALT NOT BEAR FALSE GUILT

Don't buy any tickets for any guilt trips, and don't let anyone sell you any, either. Don't blame yourself for things you can't control or aren't responsible for (that's your teen's job!).

## 9. THOU SHALT TAKE TIME OFF TO SMELL THY ROSES

Ease up. You're taking this job of parenting far too seriously! Feel free to be yourself. Punch out on the parenting time clock one in awhile. Let your teen see the real you.

## 10. THOU SHALT NOT BE A SOURPUSS

You can catch more teen flies with honey and humor than vinegar and sour grapes. Look for every appropriate opportunity to avert or diffuse a situation through love and authentic humor (but not hidden anger via sarcasm). Let love and humor be your first resort. The family that hugs and laughs, lasts!