

Beyond “Fine”

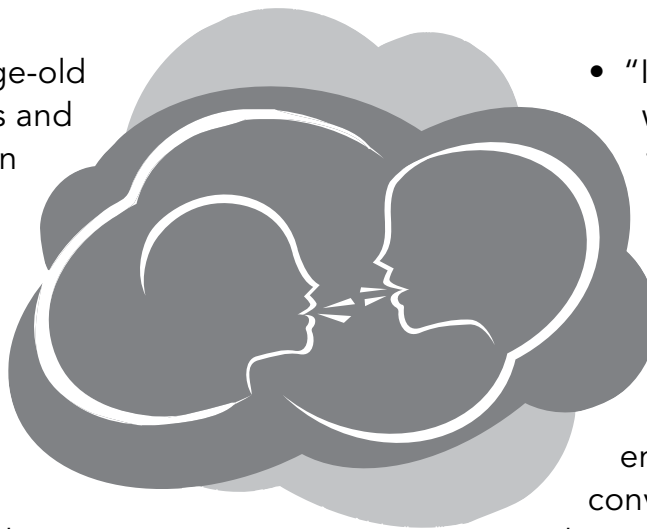
Opening the Door to Conversation with Your Teen

“Fine.” “Nothing.” These popular one-word answers are common teenage responses when asked even the most basic questions by their parents. In fact, it’s estimated only three in ten adolescents communicate well with their parents. Many teens find it difficult to talk to adults, and parents get frustrated trying to find meaningful answers to the questions “How was school today?” or “What are your plans for the weekend?”

Communication is an age-old dilemma between teens and parents but one that can be greatly improved with many rewards for the whole family.

Asking a few unusual questions can sometimes bring out stories a teenager normally wouldn’t talk about. Clever questions to keep teens and grown-ups talking include:

- “If you could change one thing about yourself, what would it be? How would that change affect your life?”
- “If you could invent a holiday, what would it be? What traditions would it include?”



- “In what ways do you wish you had more freedom?”

After asking questions parents may just sit back and wait for the answer, but actually engaging children in conversation is vital in the communication process.

Asking follow-up questions or providing open-ended responses are great ways to keep the conversation going.

Some tried and true examples include:

- “That’s interesting. Tell me more.”
- “You’ve really thought about this, haven’t you?”
- “Have you always thought this way?”

Source: ARA Content and the Search Institute’s Mary Ackerman, author of *Conversations on the GO: Clever Questions to Keep Teens and Grown-Ups Talking*.



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