**Five Keys to Motivating Your Teenager**

By: Karen Flick M.S., CAS Certified School Psychologist *adapted from Daniel Wong*

1. Focus on effort and progress, not performance
	1. Many parents monitor their teenagers’ performance more closely than they monitor the balance in their bank account. When parents overemphasize performance, teenagers begin to think that only the outcome matters, not the process.
	2. Parents must help their teenagers understand that life is a continuous journey of learning, improving and developing.
	3. Results are important, but the growth process I far more important.
	4. So acknowledge the effort and attitude that your teenager demonstrates. This will encourage your teenager to concentrate on what he or she has control over-behavior and attitude- in reaching the desired outcome.
2. Involve your teenage in the process
	1. Many teenagers feel as if their opinions do not matter, because their parents often make major decisions on their behalf.
	2. Instead, have calm discussion with your teenager. Ask your teenager, “What do you think?”
3. Ask your teenager to make a commitment.
	1. If you want to be great at anything-a great musician, athlete, entrepreneur, technician, salesperson-you won’t get there by chance or coercion. You’ll get their by choice and commitment.
	2. In the same way, your teenager won’t become a great student just because there's an elaborate system of rewards and punishments in place. Your teenager must choose to be a great student, and commit to putting gin the effort necessary.
	3. As much as you can, allow your teenager to have the final say matters that directly concern his or her life, e.g. which club or activity to join, which subject combination to take, which program to apply for.
	4. When teenagers are allowed to chart their own course, they become more motivated, as they feel more in control of their life.
4. Speak postitvely about your teenager in front of others.
	1. Teenagers have a strange way of becoming the kind of person their parents view them as. If their parents say that they’re “useless” or “good-for-nothing,” they’ll behavior in line with this perception.
	2. But parents who give their teenagers a good reputation to live up to bring up teenagers who are self-motivated.
	3. Think about some positive behaviors that your teenage has been demonstrating, and mention this in front of your friends or relatives, when your teenager is present. Then watch as the positive reinforcement takes effect.
5. Show your teenager that you love him or her the same, regardless of academic performance.
	1. Most teenagers reports, “It seems like my parents love me more when I do well in school.” Teenagers who feel this way believe that they need to earn their parents’ love, acceptance and approval. This affects their self-esteem and self-worth.
	2. Teenagers can only maximize their potential when they’re assured of their parents’’ love.

Next month, look for five more ways to increase your teenager’s motivation.