

BEAUTIFUL SAVIOR
LUTHERAN SCHOOL
PRESENTS:
PEARLS OF LOVE AND LOGIC
Special Thoughts on Raising Kids

Friends, Clothes, Looks, and Music

It may be hard for parents to understand why the sounds blaring from the radio in their teen's bedroom are practically sacred to their son or daughter. But music, along with looks, friends, and clothes, are four things a parent should *never* criticize.

It's devastating to teens, who are seeking their own identities, when we criticize what's important to them. And, because a person's self-esteem is at an all-time low during the teen years, adolescents are even more sensitive to our opinions and the opinions of others.

It's more effective for parents to accept that clothes, looks, friends, and music are at the top of a teen's list of priorities. They're a major part of an adolescent's search for identity and individuality.

Friends

Teens often believe that spending too much time with their parents means they are neither independent nor individual. The more we find fault with their friends, the more they hang around them to prove their individuality.

Some teens dream about being wild, knowing deep down they never will be. To live out their fantasies, they sometimes choose friends their parents find objectionable. But that doesn't mean your teen will actually become wild-it just means they have found a "substitute" for their own dreams.

As parents, we should make every attempt to accept our

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teen's friends. We may even be pleasantly surprised by some of them!

Clothes and Looks

Clothes and looks are another way a teenager expresses the need to be different. Both can be healthy and non-destructive. If your teen is basically responsible, wearing an earring or a slightly weird hairstyle makes no difference!

The rule, again, is don't criticize. But if you're worried about what the relatives might think about your daughter's outfit, you might say something to her like this: "I'm a pretty reasonable parent, usually. Would it be OK for me to be just a little unreasonable this time? I mean I know what a great kid you are - but I'm not sure Aunt Betty will understand . . ." This kind of statement lets her daughter know what she wears reflects on her, not the parent.

Music

Parents who are overly critical about their teen's taste in music risk damaging the relationship they have built with their son or daughter. It's far more effective to acknowledge that teens and parents have different taste in music. There's certainly nothing wrong with asking your teen to keep the volume down or to use earphones.

You can't force your musical values onto your teen. The best way to get them to enjoy a different kind of music is to listen to it yourself and then talk about why you enjoy it instead of why *they* should.