



A Parent's Guide to Motivating Your Teen

Remember the days when your kids were little, and they were happy to do just about anything for a sticker or a kind word? Now they're older, and you have to try harder to motivate them to accomplish the simplest of task?

Many parents become frustrated with teens who play video games for hours but avoid homework and chores. The situation can be even more challenging now that COVID-19 limits opportunities for socializing and extracurricular activities.

Before you label your teen as lazy, **try to understand their perspective.** Take a look at these ideas for motivating your teen.

Overcoming Obstacles to Motivating Your Teen:

1. **Make sleep a priority.** Many teens are tired much of the time due to sleep deprivation. For biological reasons, **they need about 9 hours of rest, and they're likely to be night owls.** That can make it difficult to wake up early for school. Try enforcing consistent bedtimes and limiting screen time at night.
2. **Upgrade your diet.** Your family's eating habits could be causing fatigue too. **Avoid junk food that is high in unhealthy fats and sugar.** Serve balanced meals and nutritious snacks. Fight dehydration by drinking water and eating fruits and vegetables.
3. **Test for learning disabilities.** Many students struggle due to undiagnosed learning disabilities. Ensure that your child receives recommended tests. Work with their school to arrange any special accommodations they'll need in the classroom or through remote learning.
4. **Check hearing and vision.** **If your child's grades are dropping, they may have trouble seeing the chalkboard or hearing the teacher.** Take care of their eyes and ears with regular examinations. Talk about the dangers of listening to loud music.

5. **Treat depression and anxiety.** Sudden or dramatic increases in listlessness and withdrawal could be symptoms of depression and anxiety. Talk with your family doctor about your concerns.

Other Strategies for Motivating Your Teen:

1. **Build confidence.** **Your teen will be more prepared to motivate themselves if you boost their confidence and self-esteem.** Be generous with praise and help them to recognize their core strengths.
2. **Work as a team.** Remember that you're on the same side. Search for common goals that you can pursue together.
3. **Negotiate and compromise.** On the other hand, your teen will sometimes have different priorities than you. They might be more enthusiastic about completing their term paper if you promise to give them driving lessons over the weekend.
4. **Offer choices.** Your teen is more likely to cooperate when they can approach tasks in their own way. Let them decide how to clean their room and budget their allowance.
5. **Laugh about it.** If you have a long running conflict over dress codes and curfews, **humor may dissolve the tension.** Share a funny story about something similar that happened during your own teenage years.
6. **Lighten up.** Find a balance between setting boundaries and exerting excessive pressure. Teens may lose motivation if they feel like your expectations are too high. Praise them for making an effort instead of demanding that they win first prize.
7. **Stay calm.** Your relationship with your teen matters more than any temporary disagreement. **Speak to each other with respect and show compassion** as they try to cope with the changes in their development. Take a break if you need to regain your composure.
8. **Keep trying.** Motivating your teen is an ongoing process. You may need to repeat the same message several times and experiment with different approaches. Focus on overall progress regardless of the occasional setback.

As a parent, **you can help your child to develop intrinsic motivation and other life skills that they'll need in order to fulfill their dreams.** Your teen wants to do well, and their success depends on your guidance and support.