



Raising a leader

Have you ever been so concerned about your teenager's behaviour that you've used the age old question: "So, if your friends jumped off a bridge, would you do it too?"

Watching your teenager blindly following their friends or peers into troublesome situations such as riding a bike without a helmet or vandalising a bus seat or 'playing chicken' with cars can be concerning for a parent.

We know that teens want to fit in and be accepted as part of the crowd. It takes a teenager, with an exceptionally strong personality and confidence in their individual ideas and values, to stand up for what they believe and avoid succumbing to a friend or peer group's influence.

What can you do?

Leadership is a learned behaviour and is developed through experience. If you nurture self-esteem and confidence while providing opportunities to lead in social situations, your teenager will develop invaluable life skills, learn to believe in their own abilities, and may be less likely to be a follower.

There are many leadership roles in the home, in the school and the community that your teenager can take on such as coaching a younger sporting team or being the editor of the student newsletter. Some of these leadership roles will require specific strengths but there are some qualities that your teenager will need if they want to be a leader in any situation.

1. **Honesty**
2. **Respect for others and their opinions**
3. **Good communication skills**
4. **Able to make responsible decisions**
5. **Courage**
6. **Confidence**



**BUILD YOUR
TEENAGER'S
LEADERSHIP
QUALITIES**

Watch movies that tell stories about teen or young adult heroism through intelligence, creativity and courage.

Delegate responsibilities at home where your teenager can practise and talk about their leadership skills.

Encourage hobbies and sports where your teenager can feel proud of their accomplishments and can start to coach or teach others.

Show pride in your teenager's accomplishments. Let them know what qualities you observed and admired.

Praise your teenager often and when it is deserved. Praise that is unsubstantiated can make your teenager not believe you when you actually point out the true things that they have achieved and should be proud of.

Recognise your teenager's strengths rather than their challenges. Help your teenager to acknowledge what they are good at and build on those strengths.

Find opportunities where you can give your teenager freedom with responsibility.