

Communication Tip No. 11: Why Lecturing Doesn't Work

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The lecture. You remember it. Your parents caught you doing something wrong, were disappointed in your grades or thought it was time for you to grown up. They sat you down and they talked. And talked. And talked.

I remember sitting in my room after one particular argument as a teenager and knowing that reconciliation with my parents would come, but with it the dreaded lecture. I vowed that I wasn't going to lecture my kids—famous last words.

It is difficult not to lecture kids, especially teenagers when they aren't living up to your expectations. After all, as the adults, we do have a lot more experience than they do, more knowledge as well as the desire for kids to grow up into wise, virtuous adults.

However, if we think back to a time when we were being lectured, it's easy to understand that lectures usually aren't effective. The problem, the [American Academy of Pediatricians](#) explains, is that regardless of intent, teenagers perceive lecturing to be condescending or hostile. Lectures are often full of abstract lessons, which teenagers who are upset or kids who are too young are unlikely to absorb.

While you may have learned pearls of wisdom that kids would benefit from hearing, the best way to share them is in a dialogue, preferably when the child is calm enough to process what you are saying.

If tempted to lecture, probably the best thing to do is wait until both you and the child have a little distance from the argument or incident. Once both people are calm, then the situation is best addressed in a way that the child is able to understand and talk with you about the issue if need be. Additionally, by avoiding "the lecture," you can also ask the child or teen questions to get to the root of what the problem might be.

The goal of communications with your children or those to whom you minister should be to help lead them on the path to a happier, holier life. This is best accomplished through steady guidance, a listening ear and concrete wisdom where needed. Lecturing, on the other hand, results in little but frustration—both for the kid and the adult.

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