

# Ten Things Your Teen Is Reluctant to Tell You

by Colleen L. Reece

Cummings, E. E., (1971) Six Nonlectures. Antheneum, New York

... remember one thing only: that it's you - nobody else - who determine your destiny and decide your fate. Nobody else can be alive for you nor can you be alive for anyone else.

Working with Adolescents:

Ten Things Your Teen Is Reluctant To Tell You:

The full, original, text for this article appears in the table below this 10 point summary:

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1. It's hard to be a PG teen in an X-rated world
2. When you say "absolutely not," it takes the monkey off my back
3. You used to drive my monsters away, but now I have different ones
4. I'm not being moody
5. I don't know how else to respond
6. I don't like being compared to others
7. I want to learn how to walk my path, instead of simply following yours
8. I do feel very alone. I miss the notes you used to put on my pillow
9. You treat me like a child, but when I act like a kid, you tell me to grow up
10. I question everything you've taught me
11. 11. Mom, Dad, I know it's hard

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#### **1. Walk in my combat boots.**

Every time I step out the door, its like walking into a war zone. You tell me sins been around since Day One, but it couldn't have been anything like this. When you were my age, at least kids knew they were doing something wrong. My world preaches that its up to us to decide what's right and what's wrong. The only thing sinful in todays politically correct world is to not do your own thing or to be intolerant of someone elses lifestyle. Some of my friends, even those from good homes and religious backgrounds, tell me, Trying marijuana or booze is no big deal or If you're really in love, its okay not to wait for marriage.

You've taught me better, and I'm hanging in there. Yet, if you walked in my shoes, you'd understand that its hard to be a PG teen in an R-rated world.

#### **2. My holdout span is limited.**

Read my mind. I cant always express how thankful I am for parents who wont let me do everything I ask. It wears pretty thin when I keep making up my own excuses about being a no-show at after-event parties. So when you say absolutely not, it takes the monkey off my back. Its okay to ground me when I mess up. It shows me you care. I might gripe (that's part of being a teen), but I'm often relieved to have an out.

#### **3. The world is strange, and I'm afraid.**

You used to drive my monsters away, but now I have different ones. I'm scared about not becoming class treasurer or not making the debate team. I think about guns at school and drive-by shootings. My friends parents are getting divorced, and I wonder if one day Ill have to choose between the two of you.

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### **4. I cant perform on demand.**

Just because I'm good in football or drama doesn't mean I can perform in the living room. I'm not being moody; I just need the band behind me. Putting on a helmet or stage makeup gives me security. Maybe you could invite those people who care to a football game or a school plays. Ill do a good job there, and you will be proud of me.

### **5. Don't be embarrassed if I don't respond the way you hope I will.**

I wish you wouldn't get all apologetic when I mumble hello to Uncle Wilbur and then turn into a zombie, You don't know how hard it is to field remarks like Hey, Josh, you've grown a foot since I last saw you!

When I say, No way, I still only have two feet, I don't mean to be rude. I'm tired of hearing the same thing for the bazillionth time, and I don't know how else to respond.

### **6. Please don't compare me to others.**

I don't like being compared to others, especially within the family. I gag every time someone asks, Are you a swimmer like Hannah? She was so good. So what? That's her, and I'm me, and regardless of what people might think, we are not Siamese twins.

### **7. I cant like everything you think I should.**

Dad, you about had a cow when I mentioned not trying out for baseball. But what I really wanted was to learn photography and practice my tennis.

I want to learn how to walk my path, instead of simply following yours.

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### **8. Handle me with care.**

Last week I heard you bragging about how I had everything so together. Ha! I've never felt more fragile. Everyone can see my zit-covered face and how my body's changing. Have you read the articles about teen depression and suicide that I left by your chair? I'm not considering that, but I do feel very alone. I miss the notes you used to put on my pillow. I'd like to read one telling me you're here for me if I ever do figure out what it is that's bugging me.

### **9. Let me be my own age.**

I'm in a no-win situation right now. Sometimes you treat me like a child, but when I act like a kid, you tell me to grow up and behave like an adult. You say I'm hard to live with. Well, wear my skin for a while.

I wish I were 18 and out of here. Or maybe I'd like to be a little kid again. Too bad God doesn't just let me skip all those years between 8 and 18.

### **10. Role-model Jesus for me.**

Don't be shocked when I question everything you've taught me, especially about God, Christ and faith. It isn't enough to tell me Jesus makes a difference. I really need to see it, like when Paul told Timothy to be an example in speech, in life, in love, in faith and in purity (1 Timothy 4:12).

Mom, Dad, I know it's hard. And I guess that's the 11th and most important thing I wish I could tell you. I really do know.

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