

Relentless Pursuit of Your Teen's Heart

Written by Lillian Chebosi
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I have sat under the instruction of a few awesome parenting coaches. I have even taught parenting classes to groups of young parents when my children were young. As a result, raising my little ones felt like a breeze those early years. I thought my children were cooperative and I took them with me wherever I went.

I later realized that although my children were growing and adjusting into a different stage, I wasn't. When my children became adolescents, I missed to notice that they were not always enthusiastic about going places with me like they were when they were younger. I was also pushing them to do things the way they always did them rather than motivating and encouraging them. Because they challenged me, I regret that sometimes it came down to "my way or the highway". This pushed them away, and as a result, I found that there were times when I didn't like them.

After a few twists and turns, I finally came to the realization that nothing matters more. If you ask me, our children are our most precious treasurers here on earth. We are foolish when we think that because we are providing for our children's basic needs, we are doing a lot. Absolutely not! Our teens would rather have our dedication and support than the expensive schools we take them to or fancy houses we have them live in. We are mistaken to think that because they are privileged, they shouldn't want anything, and that whatever they want they should earn.

We have no problem extending financial support to distant relatives and friends yet we think our kids are entitled when they ask for an extra pair of shoes or a fresh coat of paint in their rooms. Doesn't charity begin at home? We are happy to spend hours out with friends on the weekend or at a church meeting but are too tired to sit through a movie with our adolescents. When we do this, we make our kids feel that other people are more valuable to us than they are.

Just because they are teens doesn't mean that they don't need us as much. This is the stage when they feel the most emotions. We shouldn't be okay with our teens staying away in their rooms when we are home. What's normal is them wanting to hang out with us when they are not with their friends. Happy teens still want to do things and go places with their parents every now and then.

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These are not fantasies. I have found that if we are serious about pursuing our teens' hearts, they come alive again. How do we do that? It takes creativity and boldness. It takes putting them first before other people. It takes going all out in speaking their love languages. When you come to the realization that nothing that you are busy with and care about matters more than your teen, you will do whatever it takes to win him or her back, by God's grace.

For His Glory,

Lillian Chebosi