

## DOOR OPENERS

Here are some key phrases to use that will open the door to conversations. These questions will promote more than one word responses and will also express your interest in what your children are saying.

- “What do you think?”
- “That’s a good question.”
- “I don’t know, but I can find out.”
- “I’m interested in what you’re saying.”
- “Would you like to share more about this?”
- “Do you know what that means?”
- “Do you want to talk about it?”
- “That sounds important to you.”

## DOOR SLAMMERS

These are the exact opposite of door openers. These are surefire ways to stop conversations by making youth feel that you don’t care about their feelings or thoughts.

- “We’ll talk about that when you need to know.”
- “That’s just for boys/girls”
- “You don’t need to know that.”
- “Don’t come to me if you mess up.”
- “You’re too young to understand.”
- “If you say that one more time, I’ll...”
- “That’s none of your business.”
- “I don’t care what your friends are doing.”



## What Teens Wish They Could Tell Their Parents About Communication

"I communicate better with teens because they understand me better. It's easier to connect with teens because we are the same age and they can relate to anything I'm going through. Sometimes I think parents forget what it's like to be a teen." -8<sup>th</sup> grade girl

"I would say that it's hard for parents to relate to teen because teens aren't willing to be open with their parents and teachers and that if parents want to communicate better with teens, they should earn their trust to talk about all things without judgment and with no punishment, only arms and advice." -11<sup>th</sup> grade girl

"Parents need to find the balance between friend and dictator in order to be someone who we can not only come to and trust but also respect." -12<sup>th</sup> grade girl

"Use food." -11<sup>th</sup> grade boy

"I think something important that parents and teachers should remember is to check their baggage at the door - don't come in with preconceived expectations about what's best for them, what will make them happiest, etc." -10<sup>th</sup> grade girl

"I would tell them to listen. Teens want nothing more than to have their ideas and be heard and judged with an unbiased opinion of one's own emotions." -11<sup>th</sup> grade girl

"Parents should try to be more Type B people than Type A people. Teenagers (boys) respond to questions more than demands, like to be asked rather than told. We like not to be in such a rush and make things more relaxed." -11<sup>th</sup> grade boy

"I would say parents and teachers can communicate better with teens if they instill trust in them. There is a balance between being a parent and scolding, but also being a listening ear. Teens don't want to confront their parents about things because they are afraid of judgment. If parents establish right from wrong but understand when a child messes up then I think open communication can happen, it all starts with trust from both sides." -11<sup>th</sup> grade girl

"I would say that the parent should not only listen to the kid but stop and seriously consider what their teen just said before going off on them again. Because that happens 2 me a lot." -8<sup>th</sup> grade girl

