

→ Mark your confusion.

→ Purposefully annotate the article (1-2 mature, thoughtful responses per page to what the author is saying)

→ Write a 250+ word response to the article.

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## 10 Essential Life Skills for Teens

By Sagari Gongala for *Mom Junction*, 1-9-17, excerpted by Dave Stuart Jr.

### 1. Money or Budgeting Skills

Money may not be the most important thing in life, but it certainly is vital for a comfortable life. Education gives you the knowledge and some skills you need to become employable. But it may not give you the skills to manage your earnings and spending, save money, etc. In simple words, you need to make your teenagers financially literate. The important financial concepts that you can help them learn to include:

- Make a budget and stick to it. Your children should know when to spend and when to save.
- Every teen must know how to open a bank account, use the ATM, transfer money online and write a check.
- Apply for a credit card, how to use it and how not to get into debt using a credit card. The most important lesson your child should learn here is how credit works and how quickly they can get sucked into a whirlpool of debt if they are not careful.
- Save money to buy or invest in something, for emergencies.
- Give money to charity without going overboard.
- Maintain financial records.
- Assess the basic market value of goods.

### 2. Cooking or Food Skills

Knowing how to procure food or cook food is one of the primary life skills for teenagers. Teach them the below basic food skills so that they can survive in any part of the world.

- Procuring groceries is important to cook. One of the important skills here is to be able to identify different ingredients and know where they are available.
- Using kitchen appliances like microwave, coffee maker, dishwasher and toaster among others.
- Knowledge about utensils, cutlery and how to use them.
- Being able to prepare a healthy meal with the ingredients available. Teach your teen the basics of cooking a decent meal using simple ingredients.
- Storing food in the right way. You want your kids to know where and how to store different food products like fresh produce, packaged food, and liquids.
- Reading food labels for nutrition and ingredient information.

### 3. Dressing Sense or Clothing Skills

Your teenagers will not continue to dress themselves like how you once dressed them. They may change their style completely owing to external influences, but the chances are that they are likely to get influenced by the wrong people. So, here is what you can help them get one of the everyday skills right.

- Picking the right sized clothes, a decent outfit.
- Choosing the right kind of clothes for the right occasion.
- Sewing is a skill both men and women can benefit from.
- Iron a shirt, a trouser or suit. What is more important is to distinguish between clothes that need ironing and those that don't (we don't want them ironing their jeans now, do we?).
- Do the laundry. Teach your teen to wash clothes by hand or using a washing machine and to deal with simple stains.
- Fold clothes and put them neatly in their cupboard. You do not want a messy closet when they are at home or away.
- Pack a suitcase.
- Read and understand fabric labels.

#### **4. Personal Grooming**

Grooming is a skill that children should be taught early on. Personal grooming is important to stay healthy and also have a good social or romantic life.

- Teach them healthy habits like brushing and bathing daily.
- Explain the importance of keeping their bodies clean. It is important that they know how to care for their skin and hair.
- Boys should know how to shave or maintain facial hair in a hygienic way.
- Teach girls to stay clean during their periods, proper disposal of sanitary pads, etc.

#### **5. Cleanliness and Hygiene**

Cleanliness is one of the tenets of hygiene. Teach your kid to keep himself as well as his surroundings clean and tidy. This is part of their personal grooming and home management skills. Some of the basic things that your teen should be able to do include:

- Dusting and vacuuming.
- Mopping floors and getting rid of cobwebs.
- Keeping bathrooms and toilets clean.
- Keeping the kitchen clean.
- Clearing garbage regularly.
- Eliminating clutter from time to time.
- Knowing how to clean dishes by hand, not all homes come with a dishwasher.

#### **6. Social skills and manners**

You don't want your teenager to be singled out because of his or her clumsy manners, do you? Teaching your child skills and manners that he or she must display in a social setting is essential if you want them to have a smooth social life.

- Explore and pursue hobbies, recreational interests and activities to meet like-minded people.
- Develop and maintain friendships.
- Create and nurture personal relationships. Valuing relationships and people in our life is something that only a parent can teach.
- Maintain healthy family relationships.
- Know party etiquette, including how to be host and guest.
- Respect people and their views, regardless of what they think about others.

#### **7. Organization skills**

Lack of organization is one of the factors that lead to poor time management. A poorly organized person is almost always searching for something. Sounds familiar?

Here is what you can do to make your teenager stay better organized:

- Teach them the simple rule of Kaizen – a place for everything and everything in its place. Help them implement this rule and they will not have to 'search' for something the next time.
- You can help them use an organization tool or system to arrange their books, clothes, and other things.
- Organization also helps de-clutter a room and makes it easier to find something in less time.
- Explain to them that they can avoid making blunders when they are more organized.

#### **8. Communication Skills**

Communication may seem more like a business skill. But think about it, won't your teenager need to communicate in his personal life? Teaching your teen how to get his or her message across without offending another person is important. Communication is a critical skill that your teenager will need to master for interpersonal relationships in personal and professional lives.

Talk to your teen about these important skills when it comes to communication.

- People are different, and all don't speak the same language.
- There is a need to understand the individual's temperament before determining how to communicate with them.
- Nobody likes being told what to do. Even your teenager does not appreciate that.
- Explain them the importance of listening skills in communication.
- Empathy and the importance of understanding another person's perspective are necessary.
- Negotiation skills to create win-win situations.
- Different forms of communication like writing, talking and non-verbal behavior.
- Using different modes of communication like a telephone, letters or email, etc.

## **9. Behavioral Skills**

The character of an individual shows in the way he or she behaves. Help your teenager build a strong personality by helping them develop healthy behavior. Here are a few basic things you can teach them.

- Accepting a mistake, admitting a fault and taking responsibility for their actions are perhaps the first things you can teach your teen.
- Most teenagers have a problem apologizing. Teach them to say 'sorry' and not feel embarrassed about it.
- Teach them to be polite and say 'please' and 'thank you' when needed.
- Morality is a concept that you should introduce to your teenagers early on. That teaches them to stand up for what they believe is right, conscientiousness, and a sense of responsibility for the less fortunate.
- Teach them to stay true to themselves and others. Honesty is a trait that teenagers should be encouraged to develop.
- Teach them to ask for help when needed. It is important to be self-reliant, but there are times when we all need help. Explain to them that it is 'okay' to ask for help.

The only way to help your teenager learn about moral behavior, honesty, and character, is through practice. Parents should guide the kids through their growing years to inculcate healthy behavioral traits.

## **10. Coping with Emotions**

Teenagers tend to see everything in black and white. Teaching them to cope will allow them to see that it is not all good or bad, there is something in between. Coping and self-management skills that you can teach your teenager, especially girls, include:

Self-management or control, this allows them to set the pace to how they react to different situations, people and things in life.

Teens will have to cope with loneliness and being away from their loved ones when they go to college. It can be a difficult time for them if they do not learn how to deal with the change.

Avoiding impulsive decisions that can have severe consequences, mostly negative.

Managing feelings in a healthy way. Teach your teen to think and act, rather than react. Reactions can result in negative consequences, but thoughtful action seldom does.

As an adult, your teen will have to deal with stress at work, home, in personal relationships and so on. Coping with stress is an important skill you should help your teen acquire.

A critical skill that you should help your teenager with is accepting their emotions. Tell them that no emotion is bad or good, and it is okay to feel happy, sad, afraid, angry, aroused, silly, jealous and even guilty. The trick is not to dwell on a particular emotion.

Teach them different ways to deal with their emotions, such as physical activity, meditation, listening to music, or just by talking about it.

Spirituality can also help in coping with major changes in life.

**Response option(s):**

- Of the skills listed by the author, which do you believe are most important in living a good life after high school? Explain.