



Family Matters

Making Family Life Easier

Teenagers & Role Models

Do you know who your teenager admires, who their role model is? Do they emulate their behaviour in any way, and how do you feel about that person's behaviour and values?

Teenagers select role models, whether good or bad, to emulate. As they strive to develop a sense of identity and purpose, role models become important in helping a young person identify the behaviours, attitudes and qualities they need to succeed in life.

As celebrities are constantly in the media, they have become role models for many teenagers and young adults, influencing their attitudes and behaviours. Unfortunately many of the role models for today's teens are size zero superstar singers or movie stars shooting machine guns, with less coverage being given to those who project positive messages.

As role models can have such a huge influence on young people, it is important for parents to keep the lines of communication open with their teenagers, to help them work out if a celebrity or person is a worthy role model. The following can help get the conversation started:

- Casually talk to your teenager about who their favourite celebrities are and what it is they admire about the person. Find out more about the celebrity; watch an episode of a show they are in with your teen or read up on them.
- Ask them for their opinion of the actions or lifestyle choices of the celebrities they admire and offer your own opinion on these different celebrities. When discussing their role models with them, it is important to remember that with your help and guidance, young people can still admire the talents and skills of celebrities while also recognising the mistakes or bad choices that person is making in their personal lives.
- Ask them if they have any other role models, aside from celebrities. Role models don't have to be famous or popular, they come from all walks of life; family members, teachers, coaches and many others in a community who demonstrate positive qualities and make responsible decisions that your teenager can look up to.

As well as talking to your teenager about who they admire, it's important to remember that you as their parent are still a powerful role model for them; your behaviours also offer them a road map to follow in life. Young people respect adults who walk their talk, so rather than telling them what to do or what not to do, model the behaviours you want to see in them. 'Seeing is believing', what young people see and believe they become!



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