



## What about the parents?



I remember when I was a teenager I thought about how I would be a different parent than my mom. No matter what she did I felt she didn't really know what was going on for me. I still feel that way sometimes and I'm a grown woman now.

It must be confusing for kids. Parents give such mixed messages to kids sometimes – like, don't smoke and don't drink but there they sit doing it themselves! I remember being a teenager and waiting anxiously to “grow up” and be on my own, do my own thing, and be my own boss. Unfortunately, I haven't always been the best boss for myself. Then, I had children and all of a sudden I wasn't my own boss anymore because I had to think about how MY behaviour affected my children.

I had to think about it because I was drinking too much and partying too much and I knew that I didn't want that for my children. I smoked too. I hated smoking. I hated that I had a hard time stopping. I hated that it was making me sick all the time. I felt guilty when I saw the commercial on tv where the little girls are having a tea party and they are pretending to smoke. It made me feel like a really stupid adult meanwhile my child was looking up to me in exactly the same way.

Sometimes it's hard to know just what kind of role model to be for them. I still had a bit of the “rebel” in me. I still wanted to do what I wanted and not have anyone tell me I couldn't! Well, the two don't go together very well. It seems like an obvious decision right? Cut out the partying and be a good example for your children. I know that, but I also know that it isn't always that easy. It just takes some of us longer to grow up than others.

I keep going back to my teenage thinking and how I thought that no matter what my mom said to me there was no way SHE could understand the complexities of MY life. The stuff she was talking about was from the DARK AGES as far as I was concerned and held no relevance for my life.

So I guess that's where I've grown as a parent. I've learned that while talking has its place, sometimes the best way to be there for my kids is to just LISTEN without judgement. The world IS different for them than it was for me so my best bet is to hear from them how it is now.

Are you being heard? Do you have something to say that no one wants to hear?

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