

Nobody told you when you had children how personal it would feel when that very same child made a mistake that broke your trust. Nobody told you how much it would hurt your feelings. And, I don't know if anyone ever told you how important it would be to let your teen know that trust can be restored!

But let me tell you now! It is imperative that your teenager knows that no matter how big of a mistake or a mess they make, you haven't slammed the door on them. Sometimes that is really hard.

Teenagers often have no idea that the decisions they make, good and bad, are absorbed into the very heart of you, their parent. And, as parents, you often give that decision great influence over your confidence as a parent! Let me say this, and please hear me. The choices your teenagers make do not define you as a parent! They are your teenager's choices.

The really great thing about trust is that it can be renewed and restored. The first hurdle we have to get over is understanding that it is "when" and not "if" our child messes up. Yes, they know what is right and good. They haven't forgotten what we have taught them, but because of their intense need for freedom, they are going to make mistakes.

Biblical Example

When King David broke trust with God by taking another man's wife, and then killing that same man, (I Samuel 11 & 12) God didn't immediately confront David. I Samuel 11:27 says, "When the time of mourning was over, David sent and brought her (Bathsheba) to his house and she became his wife; then she bore him a son. But the thing that David had done was evil in the sight of the Lord." The time of mourning for Jews was at the least 30 days, and it also says that Bathsheba bore David a son by the time the prophet Nathan appeared to tell David what God had to say.

After a break, you can teach them how to take responsibility, ask for forgiveness, and recognize how to restore that trust with you. Whether you know it or not, your trust is very valuable to your teen. Have you ever lost something of value? How much more valuable is it to you when you find it again? Don't you take better care of it?

And so will your teen.

Source: ministrytoparents.com

Broken Trust



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Most of our teen's mistakes happen because they are trying to figure out boundaries. They are trying to figure out how life works best. Sometimes they make foolish choices that lead them outside God's boundaries. Other times, they willfully choose what is less than God's best for them. Scripture calls this sin. It also tells us that part of the consequences of our sin is a broken relationship between us and God. The same thing happens between you and your teenager. If you are like me, you are acutely aware of the pain that comes from your teenager lying to you, not following through on promises, or unleashing their anger at you.

Take a Step Back

Your teen often has no idea the power that they hold over you to hurt your heart as a parent. That's why they sometimes don't understand why you have to take a step back in order to process what they have just done or said that brings you pain.

In order for our teens to learn how to restore trust with us, they also have to learn that sometimes we just need a moment to work through the pain that they just caused us. When your teenager makes a choice that is opposed to Godly principles you have always taught, you need to take a moment, or a day, or even longer to work through the anger, the fear, and the sadness of the results of broken trust. You will be better able to help your teen understand that their choices affect so many more people than just themselves.

We, as parents, have to know what to do when trust is broken. Do we smother them with shame and guilt, or do we give them hope that our trust can be restored? Do we teach them that they can earn it back, or once broken, never regained? We have to set our teens up for success and not failure. That is why they need to believe that they are not bad kids. They just made a bad decision.

What Next?

Have you ever met a teen that has been told they are a bad kid by those who are supposed to be their biggest cheerleader? Why bother trying to do what's right if it's not possible. This is what we tell our kids when we dole out consequences without offering them the hope of regaining our trust. If your boss is constantly telling you what a poor employee you are, you start believing him. Why is it surprising when our teens do the same?

Yes, you have to tell them you are disappointed. Yes, you have to give them consequences. But it is imperative to show them that you believe that they are a good kid that can make right choices. Tell them that the same God who made them is still at work in them, even when there is broken trust. If you believe in them, more importantly if you have faith in our Father who made them, then you must give them a reason to keep trying.

If your teen has broken trust with you, I would like to encourage you to have a conversation with them about restoring trust. The definition of restore is "to bring back to the original condition." And trust means confidence or hope. You want to teach your teenager how to bring back your confidence in them to its original condition.

Trust is a very valuable commodity in any relationship. When it is given the opportunity to be restored after it has been broken, it places even more value on it. And you place value on the teen who broke it. I have never met a teenager who did not want to have great value in the eyes of their parents.

Homework

Here is your homework. If you are experiencing a season of distrust with your teenager, I want you to go to them TODAY. Look them in the eyes. Put your hand on their hand and say, "I've got your back. I'm in your corner. No matter what happens next, I choose to walk with you." When you do this you get the joy of showing your child the same grace God has given to you.

Let your teen know trust can be restored. Maybe not today or tomorrow, but at some point that trust can be brought back to its original condition.

"Trust in the Lord with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding."

Proverbs 3:5