

These thirteen lessons—created to deepen your relationships—provide workable strategies for applying the principles of *The 5 Love Languages® of Teenagers*. They offer glimpses of your relationship’s potential when you understand and speak a teenager’s love language.

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UNDERSTANDING TODAY'S TEENAGERS

1

INSTRUCTIONS: Complete this first lesson after reading chapter 1 (“Understanding Today’s Teenagers,” pp. 15–27) of *The 5 Love Languages of Teenagers*.



Independence: one of the two underlying themes of teenage culture, it involves becoming a self-governing person by taking on responsibility, making decisions by yourself, and charting a course for adulthood.

Identity: one of the two underlying themes of teenage culture, it involves figuring out who you are, establishing a unique persona, and shaping your perception of where you belong.

OPENING QUESTIONS

1. What were you like as a teenager? What would your parents say you were like as a teenager? What would your friends say you were like as a teenager? What would your teachers, instructors, or coaches say you were like as a teenager? What would your rivals, competitors, or nemeses say you were like as a teenager?
2. If you could choose certain experiences from your teenage years for your child to experience, what would they be? Why? If you could spare your child from experiencing certain things from your teenage years, what would they be? Why?

THINK ABOUT IT

3. Dr. Chapman writes, “**The places where the teenager expresses independence and identity have changed through the years, but the means continue to be basically the same.**” What are some of those means? Regarding teenage tastes, what does Dr. Chapman say you can be certain of?
4. “**Accepting and adapting to the changes that take place in the teen’s body**” is one challenge that virtually all young people face. What questions do these physiological changes spur in the mind of a teenager? In addition to experiencing physical changes, teenagers also learn to reason and think logically. Why is it important for parents to recognize these new mental capabilities?
5. Teenagers also examine the belief systems with which they were raised to determine “**if those beliefs are worthy of [their] commitment.**” How do wise parents react to their teen’s questioning? How do those same wise parents address their teenager’s emerging sexuality? How do they address their teen’s questions about the future?
6. As Dr. Chapman points out, “**The contemporary teenager is exposed to far more cultural stimuli than his parents ever could have dreamed at his age.**” Give some examples from your own experience. What cultural stimuli does your teenager face that you never had to?

7. Dr. Chapman writes, “**A . . . cultural factor that influences the contemporary teenager is the fragmented nature of the modern American family.**” What statistics does he use to support his claim? What types of fragmentation have sociologists observed?

8. How is today’s overtly sexual atmosphere different from the atmosphere of past generations of teenagers who rebelled against their parents’ sexual mores? What does a “**truly post-Christian**” world of neutral moral and religious views look like?

9. Dr. Chapman reminds us that, amid these sobering realities, there is good news: “**Contemporary teenagers are looking to parents for guidance.**” In what areas do parents have especially strong influence? How can you maximize your influence in your teenager’s life?

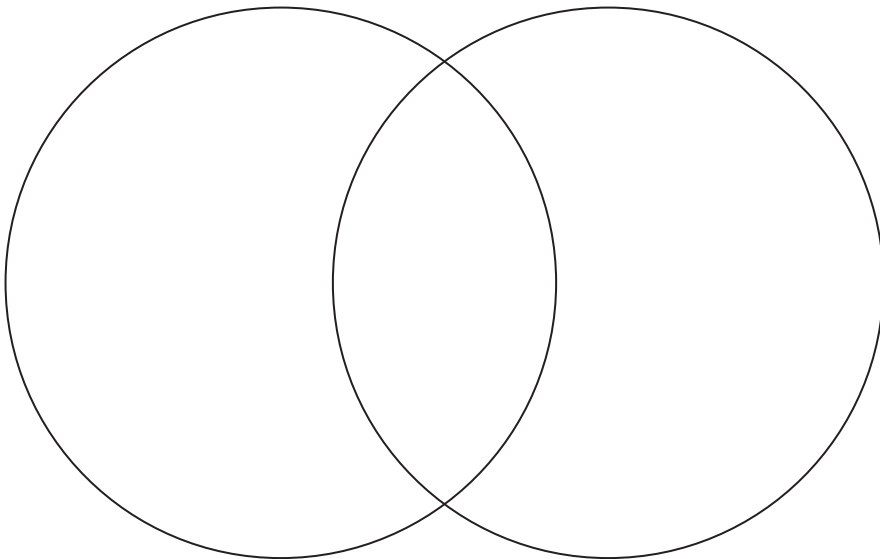
TAKE IT HOME

The first chapter highlighted some of the general trends of current and past generations of teenagers. Now it's time to think in terms of specifics. Fill in the chart below, comparing your experience as a teen with your child's experience as a teen.

	YOU	YOUR TEEN
Assets		
Challenges		
Goals		
Mistakes		
Passions		

FINDING COMMON GROUND WITH YOUR TEEN

The two circles represent you and your teenager. Fill in the diagram using information from the chart you completed on the previous page. For example, if social media is a much bigger challenge for your teen than it was for you, write “Social Media” in the part of your teen’s circle that’s unique to them. Likewise, if you and your teen are both ambitious, write “Ambition” in the area where your circles overlap.

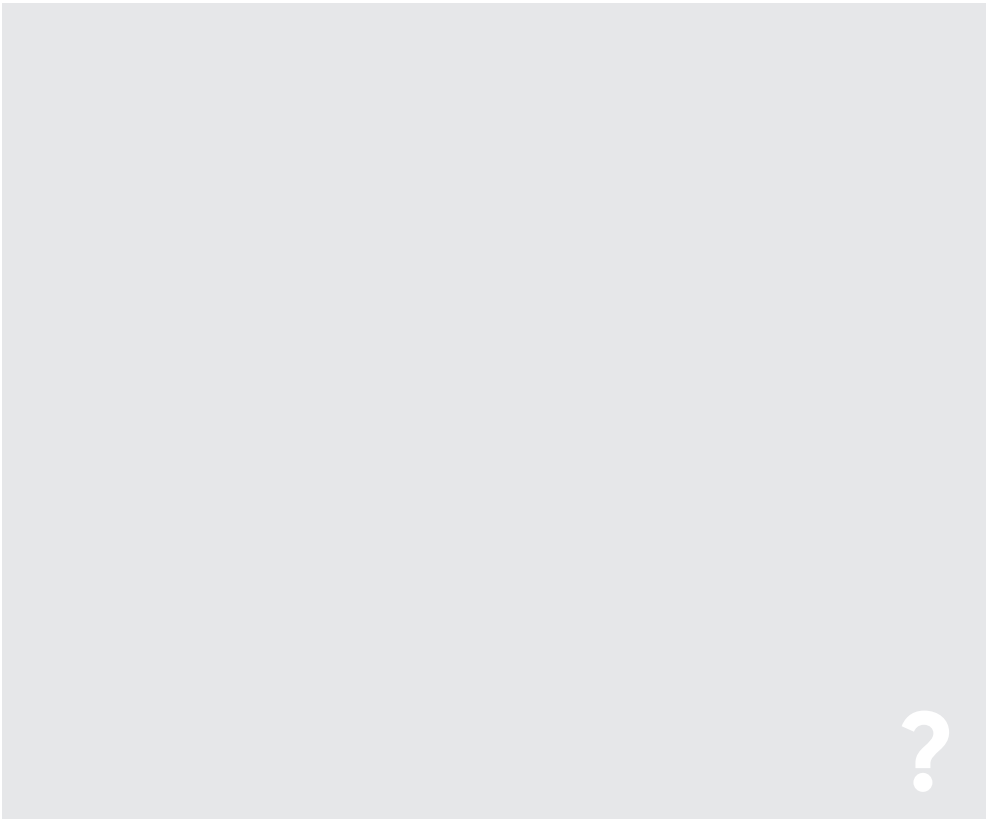


How can you use those areas of overlap to strengthen your rapport with your teenager and help him or her see you as someone who can empathize?

How can you address the experiences of your teenager that are far outside your area of overlap? How can you build trust with your teen so that he or she feels comfortable helping you understand those experiences?

LOVE CHALLENGE

To understand the challenges your teenager will encounter, you may need to step out of your comfort zone and confront some of the realities that your son or daughter faces. What will you do this week to get a better understanding of your teenager's world?



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