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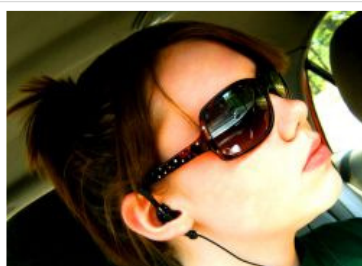
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I'm OK, but you're not.

 September 16, 9:06 AM • [SF Parenting Teens Examiner](#) • Richard Hills

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So you have a troubled or problem teen. Let me guess, they come home from school and virtually lock themselves away in their bedroom. If they do come and join the family, they are plugged into their MP3 player or PSP. You actually have to demand putting the electronics away when at the dinner table; that is if they even join you for dinner. It's a pretty common problem; I'd venture to say across Western society.



"Hello!; can you hear me?!"

Let's think back – when I was a teen, I'd plug into the cassette player with earphones on (I'm old enough that CD's were not around). Once I was driving, I'd not even come home – I'd go driving. I was usually busy enough after school with work and theatre that there were some weeks I'd barely see my parents. Was I a problem or troubled child? My parents probably thought so, but guess who I thought had the problem?

It's not any different today. Oh, the script may have changed some, the technology and access to information has drastically changed, but how we communicate (or lack of communication) remains the same. I'm curious though, have you ever asked your teen why they stay away from the family so much? Some of this is natural child development for certain, but choosing to stay home to study instead of joining the family for a 'night out bowling' is something else.

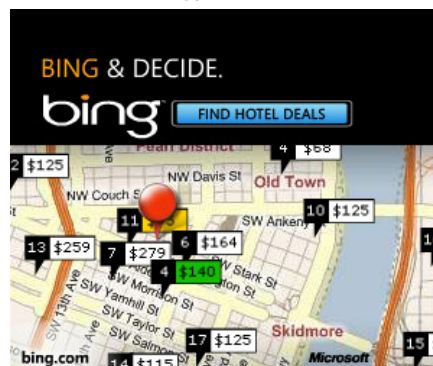
Yes, our teen can be defiant; sometimes it's what they do best. But every now and then, we must remember to turn that magnifying glass away from them and onto ourselves. What are we doing to drive wedges into that gap? If we don't know then we need to ask. So many teens feel they cannot talk to their parents, when in reality that is what everyone, both teens and parents, really want!

Mom and Dad ... here's an exercise I learned from famed author, coach and mentor [Debbie Ford](#): Imagine you are at your son or daughters graduation from high school or college. After the ceremony, your son or daughter runs up to you and gives you a big hug. At that time, what are the three things you'd like to hear your child thank you for?? Write these things down, and build a plan for yourself so that come the day you will be given the thanks you deserve – trust me, nothing feels better.

 For more info: [Essentials for Extraordinary Parenting by Debbie Ford](#)

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