

Making a parent smile will help keep you happy.



Solving

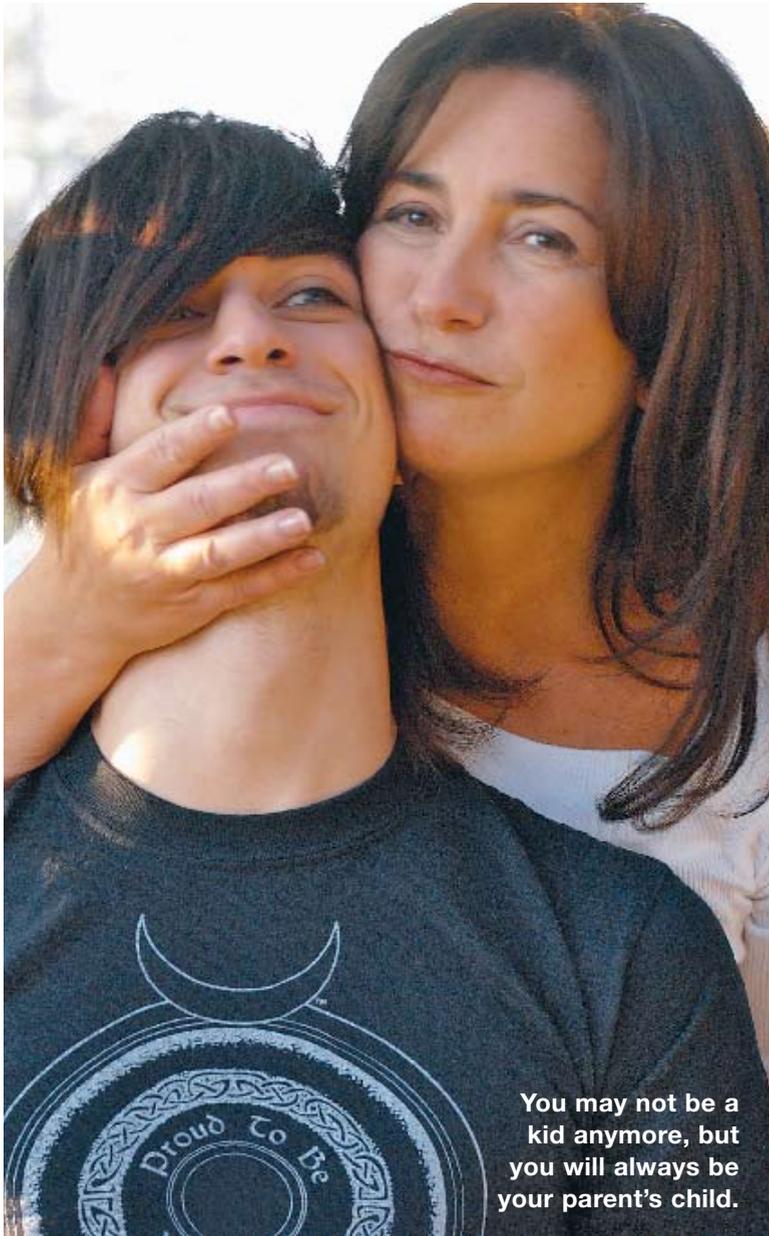
WHEN IT COMES TO GETTING WHAT YOU WANT FROM MOM AND DAD, THE TRICK IS TO GIVE THEM WHAT THEY NEED.

It helps to spend time with a parent.



the Parent

Puzzle



You may not be a kid anymore, but you will always be your parent's child.

The teenage years can be a tough time for kids and their parents. The teens want more independence and believe they're mature enough to handle it.

But their parents are reluctant to give their kids all the freedom they want. What's a teen to do?

Choices has the answer: To get what you want from your parents, you have to give them what they need. And what exactly do parents need from their teenage kids?

An open and honest relationship, according to Sean Covey, author of *The 6 Most Important Decisions You'll Ever Make: A Guide for Teens* and *The 7 Habits of Highly Effective Teens*. That way everyone's needs are met. Covey likens this process to opening a bank account.

"The amount of trust you have in a relationship is like a checking account at a bank," he tells *Choices*. "With your parents, you build a strong relationship one deposit at a time."

But we didn't just talk to Covey. We asked two teenagers, Shelby and Katie Godfrey of Baldwinsville, New York, what they thought. Together, Covey, Shelby, 17, and Katie, 13, came up with a list of what teens can do to make sure their parents are getting what they need from them. Turn the page to find out what all three of them said.

1

Think of them.

Your parents are your biggest authority figures, but they're also human beings. They have feelings and problems just like you do. So, before you ask to go to a concert three hours away from home, check how your parents are doing. Maybe Mom's had a bad day at work or Dad's grumpy because his back hurts. If that's the case, wait until your parents are feeling better before making your request.

2

Help out.

Does the dishwasher need emptying? Does your brother need a ride home from soccer practice? If so, "don't wait to be asked to do the task," Covey says. Your proactive behavior will win you points with your parents. If they see you helping out without being asked, they'll likely be impressed with your sense of responsibility. They'll then be more apt to extend your privileges to show their appreciation. This has

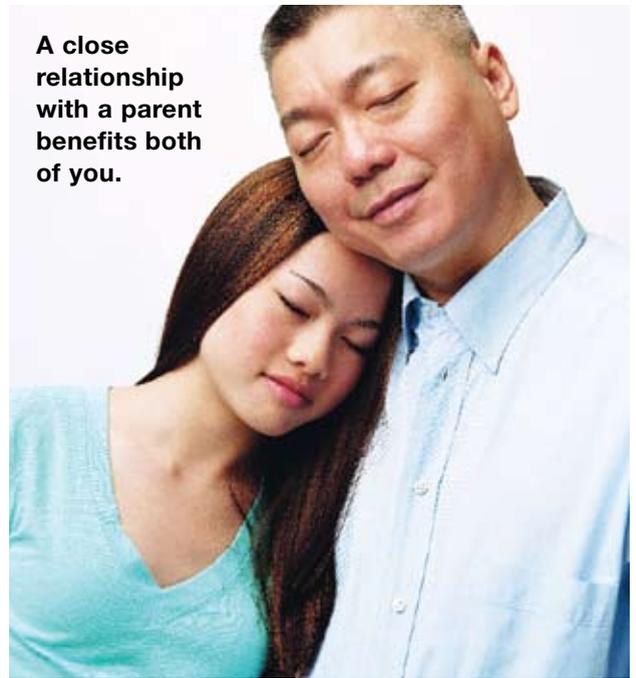
worked for Shelby. "I do things like help out with chores and in return, they give me freedom," she says. "I believe that if I respect my parents, they will give me the same respect in return."

3

Plan ahead.

The more time you give Mom and Dad to prepare for something, the better your chances of being able to do it. If you want to stay out late on prom night, don't wait until the last minute to ask permission. Make the request well in advance of the event. "If your parents have time to think about it, often they'll be willing to make an exception to the rules," Covey says.

A close relationship with a parent benefits both of you.



4

Open up.

Mom and Dad are more apt to let you do something if they know what's going on in your life. The more mysterious you are, the more they'll worry about what you might be doing when they're not around. Being open with your parents isn't always easy, but the payoff can be huge. "There are things that I find hard to talk to my parents about, but the fact that I know they will listen helps," Shelby says.

5

Work together.

If an agreement can't be reached, compromise. "There is almost always a third option," Covey says. Giving in a little to your parents shows maturity and they will respond positively.

6

Battle wisely.

"I am careful about the words I use," Shelby says. "If we are arguing, I try to make my point clearly. If they don't understand it, I try to rephrase what I'm saying."

And you need to know when to cut your losses. "If your parents don't give in, don't be snotty and keep begging," Katie says. "Let it be. I've learned that sometimes it's not worth the fight."

—Alexis Burling

Switching Roles

Below is a list of things teens often ask permission for from their parents. Read the list and then pretend you're a parent with a teenager. (Note: The teen should be same age as you are now.) Circle each item that you think is suitable for your teen. Then, on a separate piece of paper, explain your thinking. When writing, consider this question: How could your teen prove to you that he or she is responsible enough to handle each item.

- a. Stay out until 1 a.m. on weekends.
- b. Get his/her own cell phone.
- c. Get a tattoo.
- d. Go to a coed slumber party.
- e. Ride in a car with a member of the opposite sex.
- f. Go to a concert 100 miles away.
- g. Go to an R-rated movie.
- h. Go to a friend's house when his or her parents aren't home.
- i. Drive his or her own car.
- j. Buy a new iPod with your money.