

**What She Wishes You Knew**  
**A Workshop Led by Barb Steinberg, LMSW, Teen Life Coach for Girls**

The *single most important thing* to all teens is that their parents trust them to make the right choices and to learn from their mistakes. They want the space and time to do so. What advice and insight would girls give us?

**1. Let us make mistakes.**

- We aren't adults, but we aren't kids, either. We are learning how to be adults.
- We wish our parents didn't expect us to be perfect.
- We don't want you to take over time-management for us.
- When adults take over for us, we feel disempowered.
- We want to know that you love and accept us and have confidence in us.
- Give us opportunities to suggest what changes might work. Then, empower us by letting us try!

**2. Give us independence over how we spend our money.**

**3. Respect our need for privacy.**

- One of the ways we become more of an adult is by becoming more private.
- Our room is a sacred space. Show your respect for us & our privacy by knocking before you enter.

**4. We want to fit in.**

**5. We have a real fear of missing out (FOMO).**

- This is what's behind our arguments about going out with friends, having a later curfew or spending more time online.
  - *Tip: Ask teens directly if their being upset is based upon a fear of missing out.*

**6. Our Facebook page feels like an extension of ourselves.**

- Teens today are balancing two reputations—their online one and their offline one.

**7. Comparing us hurts more than you think.**

- Whenever a parent starts a sentence with, "Why can't you be more like \_\_\_\_\_ (insert name of perfect best friend or older sibling here)," teens automatically cringe. Comparing our girls to others makes them feel bad about themselves.

**8. The issues we encounter growing up may be the same as yours were, but the circumstances are different.**

- Girls want parents to recognize that colleges are more competitive and technologies like Facebook and texting add a new layer of complication to teen relationships than in our day.

**9. Risk is tempting for us.**

- Risk is appealing to our age group. This is backed by science.
- Teens want their parents to know this so the parents can encourage positive risk taking.

**10. Just because we're rolling our eyes, it doesn't mean we aren't listening.**

**11. My acting out isn't always about you. I'm hurting too!**

- Try not to take her actions personally. When she acts out, try to uncover what's behind it.

**12. Don't ask "Answer-Questions."**

- These questions undermine girls feeling that parents have confidence in their decisions.

**13. What we worry about might surprise you.**

- Don't make assumptions - Ask your teens directly about what they worry about.

**14. Pick your battles.**

- We take you less seriously the more fights you pick with us, so choose your battles wisely.

**15. When you want to talk with us – keep it casual, keep it short.**

**16. Tell us you love us (don't just show us).**

Tip: Ask your daughters: What do you wish I knew about you? What's one thing you have always wanted to tell me?

**Resources:** *Breaking the Code: Two Teens Reveal the Secrets to Better Parent-Child Communication* by Lara Fox and *Do I Get My Allowance Before or After I'm Grounded?* by Vanessa Van Petten