



Raising a Struggling Teen

by Dineen Miller

Raising teens today is a huge challenge. With regards to my own struggling teen, we've ridden the choppy waters of cancer, stress, depression, anxiety and ongoing health issues. While on this journey, I've come in contact with so many other moms out there, who are dealing with some pretty heavy-duty issues with their teenagers. How do we ride these choppy waters and navigate our teens into a place of functioning and thriving adulthood?

Through these trials and challenges, I've found comfort in four key areas:

1. You're not responsible for everything. This was a hard one for me to finally come to grips with. I didn't cause my daughter's issues. There's nothing I could have done to prevent her cancer or the ongoing health issues and anxiety that she would go through. I couldn't fix it, nor could I hold myself responsible for the outcome. I did the best I could for my daughter, then left the rest in God's hands and trusted Him for the outcome.

2. Live in the moment. When we first got my daughter's cancer diagnosis, this lesson hit hard and fast. Life became consumed with doctor appointments, surgery and treatments. And that was just the beginning of what my daughter would face. This lesson is what kept me sane some days, because I didn't let the bad moments define all the others. There are precious moments of love and closeness in every day. Grab and appreciate them. They are the inspiration and fuel to keep you going.

3. Learn to listen. Again, a big lesson for me, especially since I've always considered myself a good listener. When I'm in mommy mode, I want to fix things. I finally learned that a lot of the time, our teens just want us to listen and really hear them. This takes practice but it's vital. Our teens don't want us to "fix" them. Most of the time they will come to the right place, but they need us to hear them out. There will be times that we will need to say something, get directly involved, or take action, but most of the time, they just want to know you care and listening is a huge way to show it.

4. Pray like crazy and don't stop. I confess it's a challenge, especially when my heart broke when I saw her sadness and frustration that she couldn't be "normal." It's hard when you see them take a couple steps forward and then fall back three steps. Will it ever change? Will this person I've worked so hard to raise into adulthood walk into that role with confidence and strength? God is faithful. I cling to this truth, because He's proven it to me time after time. My challenge is not to let my impatience get in the way.

Trusting God is vital in raising your teens. He knows our kids. He knows our mother's heart for them. God can take care of whatever is going on. It may not turn out the way we imagined, but I can guarantee you that it will be the best possible outcome and result for your teenager.



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