

## 20 Reasons Why Your Teens Get Mad at You

*By: Barbara Greenberg, Clinical Psychologist*

Just when you think your teens are happy with you they start rolling their eyes and serving up a dose of unexpected anger. We can all relate to this, right? Well, as a clinical psychologist who has been working with teens for over two decades, as a mother of a teen and as a friend I am here today to tell you why they have these unexpected episodes of anger. First, of course, it's part of being a teenager and having an emotionally-driven teenage brain. However, that sort of brain coupled with a number of other thoughts, behaviors and well-intended conversations on your part can quickly lead to a downward spiral into the angry abyss or a slammed door, abrupt end to a conversation or perhaps being told that you just don't get it.

Have a look at the list below of the type of things that trigger teens' anger. I am not suggesting that you move out of your home while your teens are growing up or that you become an anxious and self-conscious parent who says nothing for 4 or 5 years. Instead, I am try to give you some clarity and understanding about what triggers these youngsters to lose their cool. We are all into understanding what is going on in our households and in public settings when we are with our offspring, agreed?

So here is a list of what might be making your teens mad. This is not an exhaustive list but I'll be back with more.

1. Teens get angry when they feel misunderstood by their parents.
2. They get mad when they feel that their moms and dads are clueless, that is, when you don't really understand what goes on in their lives and you make the dreadful error of thinking that you do. Shame on you for being so presumptuous is what they are thinking in their teen brains.
3. Believe it or not, they get angry at you when they are worried about you. I kid you not. They don't know how to express their worry so their default emotion is anger. Yikes.
4. This will be no surprise but they get angry when you embarrass them. In this instance, less is more. They get embarrassed when you try to act like a teen, dress like a teen and/or use teen language. They will not tell you this but they want you to be a parent not a friend. You already had your turn to be a teen.
5. You will be surprised by this one but they get angry at themselves when they disappoint you so what do they do? They direct the anger at you of course. More than anything else your teens do not want to disappoint you. You may not believe me but this is true. I know. The teens tell me about this all the time.
6. They get upset when you compare them to their siblings. More frequently than not they feel that they come up short.
7. Be careful here. When you talk about your teens' friends in a negative manner they get furious because they identify so closely with their friends. So, if you criticize their friends then they interpret it



as a direct criticism of them. There are so many landmines that you can step into that it's mind-boggling. Stay with me though. I'm not quite done yet.

8. Please do not use your teens as your confidantes no matter how mature they seem. They are just not ready to help you handle your problems. They are kids, remember. Confide in them and they just might run up to their rooms with no explanation. I'm sure that every parent has been there before.

9. If they are deeply upset about something that they are keeping to themselves they may act angry rather than distressed. It's just easier for them.

10. Depressed kids often present as angry — particularly males. It is not uncommon for depressed male teens to act out when feeling sad. Keep an eye out for this especially if it is anger that lasts for several days and if it is a change in behavior.

11. Teens get furious when you talk badly about your ex-husband or ex-wife around them. Look this makes sense. While this may be your ex this is not their ex-parent.

12. When you try to solve all of their problems your teens get bent out of shape. That is because they interpret this as you doubting them. They want to feel that you trust them not doubt them.

13. Your kids don't always appreciate when you turn them into your favorite child. This may put them at odds with their siblings which is not necessarily a place where they want to be. Watch out for this. Of course, it is normal to have a favorite child and this may vary at times depending on how each kid is acting but be careful not to be too obvious about your feelings.

14. Do NOT call their teachers, coaches etc. unless you have spoken to them first. They get angry because most of them would rather you not interfere unless absolutely necessary. You wouldn't want your mom or partner to call your boss, right? This is not exactly a fair comparison but it gets the point across.

15. They get mad when you ask them how their day was as soon as they walk into the house. This seems so odd because so many of us would love if our partners asked how our day was and then actually tuned in and listened to the answer. It's different with teens though. They interpret this question as how are your grades. Also, their day isn't over when they walk into the house and they need time to decompress and think things over.

16. Despite their volatility, teens cannot tolerate their parents' intensely emotional reactions. They get mad, end conversations and interpret this as their parents' inability to handle things. Teens complain about their parents' tendency to freak out so perhaps freak out privately or work on controlling your emotions. I get it. It's not that easy.

17. If your teen shares a secret with you do not share it with your friends. They have entrusted you with precious information. Treat it like the precious information that it is.



18. Do not gossip. I know that it is the human tendency to do this but teens are particularly sensitive to this. They will see you as critical and judgmental. This makes them disappointed and very distressed.

19. Try very hard not to hold a grudge or practice the silent treatment. This not only makes the teens mad but also breaks their sensitive little hearts. Also, keep in mind that you are their most important role model so you don't want to role model this sort of behavior.

AND

20. Try to read their non-verbal cues particularly when they are ready to end a conversation. They may not always tell you when they are conversationed-out but their body language may speak volumes. Pay attention so that the conversation ends on a good note rather than on an irritated note.

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