



## Principally Speaking

Special Thoughts on Raising Kids

### REASONABLE EXPECTATIONS FOR ADOLESCENTS

Parents often wonder what they should expect from their adolescents. When parental expectations are too high and limits are too tight, the adolescent becomes disrespectful and family communication and relationships can break down.

As adolescents grow older, parents must prepare their children for the *real* world, therefore *real* expectations. Out in the real world we are expected to get our job done, be respectful to others and, in general, be pleasant to be around. Thus, when children reach adolescence, wise parents have those same three rules, ***“I expect you to be respectful, responsible, and fun to be around.”***

In line with these expectations, parents may expect their adolescents to follow these simple rules:

1. Chores are to be done without being reminded.
2. The teen obtains average grades in school if they are of average intelligence.
3. When the teen is with the family, he/she is basically pleasant.

It is essential that real world expectations flow back and forth between both parents and child. The child need not remind the parents to pay the utility bill and the telephone bill. Likewise, the parent should not be expected to remind the teen to do his or her chores. The teen is not expected to

keep track of how the parent does their job at work. Likewise, it is fair for the parent to expect that the teen keep on top of the schoolwork and maintain average grades. The teen does not keep track of the parent or choose the parent's friends. Likewise, if the teen is pleasant, responsible for his/her chores, and gets average grades in school, the parent should not be overly involved in the teen's life.

When the children reach high school age, they basically use their home as a refueling pit or base camp for going off and exploring the world with friends. They often enjoy being with their friends more than they enjoy being with parents. Parents should not feel rejected. This is a stage of life. When parents rejoice in their teen's independence, and refuse to get involved in rescuing when they make mistakes, most adolescents will respond by being thoughtful about their actions and appreciative of the independence offered.

#### **Real World Expectations should be the same as Parent Expectations for Teens:**

- **Have chores done**
- **Maintain average grades**
- **Respect others and be pleasant to be around.**