



Building parent-school partnerships

WORDS Michael Grose

Why is it valuable to make teens feel older?

It's importance for parents to find time and space to have conversations with their teenagers so they can find adult connection and acceptance.

Recently I listened to fellow educator Bill Jennings, from **Time and Space** talk to parents about raising adolescents. (Bill assists parents to have great one-on-one conversations with their adolescent sons.)

When asked about the impact of having a real one-on-one conversation with his dad a fifteen-year-old boy said: **"I feel older!"** That's an incredible insight from a fifteen-year-old. I know kids always want to feel older.

Increased rights come with age. You can stay up later. You can go out more often. You become less answerable to your parents. You have more **FREEDOM**.

That's the good part. The challenging part is that with **MORE FREEDOM** comes **MORE RESPONSIBILITY**.

That's what growing up is about.

Freedom is easy. That's the child part.

Responsibility is scary. That's the adult part.

It's really scary when you have to face it on your own, without adult assistance.

Young people yearn for adult connection and adult acceptance. When they don't get it they continue to act like children.

Fewer rites of passage

Our community has few rites of passage for young people that help them to feel older. Twenty-first birthdays have lost their meaning. The first real pay packet and the independence that comes with it comes much later these days. For some, Schoolies Week is young people's only rite of passage!

It's up to parents to help their young people feel older

One way you can help your young person cross the bridge from childhood to adulthood is through holding **personal conversations** that reveal something of your own life to young people.

Conversations about childhood and family **memories**; your **life lessons**; the **hopes** and dreams you hold for young people; **your life** as a young person; your personal **ambitions**; and what life is like for you as an **adult** can help your young person feel older.

Personal conversations of these types show acceptance

They are incredibly powerful, but you need to create the **time and space** for them to happen.

Sometimes you can contrive situations for these important conversations by going away with your young person for a day or a weekend together.

Other times you may just find yourself alone with your young person, uninterrupted and you are both in the mood to talk.

Both **girls and boys** benefit from special one-on-one conversations with their mum, dad and mentors that help them feel genuinely older in the adult sense.

You need to have the **inclination**, as well as the time and space for these conversations to happen.

And I think it's incredibly important that you do!

Michael Grose 



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