

LOVE NO MATTER WHAT

When our kids make decisions we don't agree with more than ever we need a relationship with our kids from which to parent them. Too often parents focus on the negative, giving their kids the impression "When you get your act together we'll have a close relationship. Until then you better tow the line." I want to help you build a rich relationship with your kids from which you will parent. You cannot overestimate the power and influence of your relationship with your child.

1. **Be available.** Your kids need to know they are your priority—over work, over friends, church (not God). Be home when they're home.
2. **Make a short list of non-negotiables for your family.** For example: No swear words or taking God's name in vain. Nothing illegal. No sharing a bedroom unless married.
3. **Don't take the bait.** When your kids try to push your buttons let it go on by.
4. **Keep your comments to yourself.** No one likes to be pecked to death. Katie's words, "When my mom stopped nagging, I stopped complaining."
5. **Stay involved.** Not helicopter parent involved but truly interested and helpful their lives.
6. **Be you child's biggest cheerleader.** Look for and applaud any good decision they make.
7. **Speak your child's love language.** Dr. Gary Chapman wrote the book on this, *The Five Love Languages*. Find what says love to your child and speak it fluently.
8. **Maximize technology.** Text to say "I'm thinking of you" without interrupting their day. Careful with what you put on your Facebook page.
9. **Love and accept them where they are.** How refreshing for your child to have a conversation with you that was absent of parental counsel.
10. **Cooperate with God's work in you.** Seek God and ask Him what He wants you to learn and how He wants to change you.
11. **It's not all about you.** It's about your child and what's best for her.
12. **Keep praying.** Pray, "God, bring him to his senses!" Luke 15:17.
13. **Keep turning them over to God.** It's a continual reminder that we are not in control and we must continue in a walk of faith.

Our goal, as far as it depends on us, is to build a healthy relationship with our kids. Because without relationship we have nothing—no influence, no way to help, and no way to show them they way to the Lord.

Taken from *Love No Matter What: When Your Kids Make Decisions You Don't Agree With*, Brenda Garrison. Thomas Nelson Publishers