



Dear Monta Vista Parents,

August 2011

For returning students and parents, welcome back to a new school year! For new incoming students and families, welcome to Monta Vista!

We hope many of you become familiar with *Verdadera*, a **student-run publication** here on campus. *Verdadera* gives our students a voice to reach out to our families, teachers, friends and community as a whole. Our goal is to create bridges of communication and understanding on topics that our students find difficult to speak directly with their parents about, but have much to say about these sometimes controversial and sensitive topics.

2010-2011 School Year's topics are: Secrets, Judgment, Loneliness, Love, Escape, Dances, Disabilities and Disorders, and Parental Relations.

Due to budget restraints, selected stories and articles from professionals will be sent out every other month with complete issues available online at [verdadera.org](http://verdadera.org) or visit Monta Vista High School website under Student Life at [mvhs.fuhd.org/verdadera](http://mvhs.fuhd.org/verdadera). On Schoolloop, the site can be found under "School Activities" on the home page. Students can view and submit anonymously via our website.

***Verdadera* relies on donations to continue our publication. Your sponsorship is greatly appreciated and will help us provide a voice for students.**

I'd like to donate to *Verdadera*: \_\_\_\$30 \_\_\_\$50 \_\_\_\$75 \_\_\_\$100 \_\_\_Any amount welcome!  
Please make your check payable to: MV ASB/*Verdadera* and mail to: Monta Vista High School, Attn: *Verdadera* @ 21840 McClellan Road, Cupertino, CA 95014. **Please include your name and return address.** All donations are tax deductible - see the next page for more details. You can also turn in your donations directly to the school office with all other paperwork.

Thank you for reading and supporting *Verdadera*,

Verdadera Student Staff Members and advisors, Hung Wei & Carol Satterlee

# MONTA VISTA HIGH SCHOOL

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May 11, 2011

To Whom It May Concern:

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A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Deb Mandac", with a long, sweeping underline.

Deb Mandac  
Administrative Assistant for Student Activities  
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## Parental Relations

September 2011

The Verdadera staff encourages you to discuss and explore the issues and stories, as the publication aims not only to offer an outlet for expression, but to improve our lives. Keep in mind that the emotions that flow through the text and the feelings behind the words could be those of your child, your classmate, or your best friend.

*Things to consider:*

- *What constitutes a healthy parent-child relationship?*
- *How open is communication in your home?*
- *Is your relationship loving, respectful, and safe?*
- *How have your parents influenced you and your outlook on life?*

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### Student Submissions

Sometimes, I wish they'd understand. I wish they'd understand how conservative and unrealistic they're being.

Granted, without the restrictions, I'd have some semblance of a social life by now. But don't they trust my judgment? Apparently not. And with good reason.

Last year, I almost dated behind their backs. He and I met up on Facebook and spent a few days at school together before they caught me. But I'd like to think I wouldn't have gone to such extreme measures if I was allowed to date. I would have found a nice South Indian boy with a suitable GPA if I was allowed. I would have had better judgment than to 'get with' the resident player.

That's always the question, isn't it? What if? But I guess I'll never know just because it's so hard to

hold a conversation with them. They are unwilling to confront the big issues. In fact, other than the SAT II and my GPA, I don't think they see other issues with me. Intimacy? Age 25. Marriage? Don't even think about it until you're done with your med degree. A family? Kids? Those things will happen on their own.

Hello? No, they won't. I had to learn about condoms from my biology teacher in seventh grade. It was only then that I learned what "That's What She Said" meant. How was I to make informed decisions about my lifestyle, to develop good judgment if my parents just told me what to do and what not to do?

They wanted me to take their word for it. But that's not good enough for me. It might have been good enough for them, growing up in a conservative society with less of a media influence. But it's not good enough

for me—a child of the technology age.

So whenever my mom catches me just before I leave (as she usually does) and remarks on the indecency of my attire (which is nun like compared to most girls at school), I think I'm entitled to ask why. Because mother doesn't always know best. Mother needs to tell her daughter what she knows and leave it up to her to make the right decisions.

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“I was only a baby/ Now I am what you made me...”  
~ Emmy the Great  
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“Parental Relations” is an interesting topic. I would actually call this topic “Your Way of Life”, because let's be honest. Your relationship with your parents dictates your life.

There's no doubt in my mind I love my parents; I would sacrifice my life to save them if the need arises. Yet, there are times when I swear if I had the chance too I would kill my parents. Of course this is always right after an argument when my brain is not thinking properly but still it amuses me to think about how extreme I can be in my opinion towards my parents. For example, my parents are very strict in their ideologies: boys and girls don't need to have any interactions until after college, it doesn't matter if you don't like your dinner because food doesn't need to taste good or taste at all its only there so you can survive, you don't need to worry about what brands you wear unless you're paying for your own clothes, your sole objective in life is to get good grades and succeed your social life doesn't matter, and the list goes on and on. Of course over time I've been able to change their minds on a couple things yet for the most part they are steadfast in their beliefs. I am very happy with my relationship with my parents. I understand their ideologies and even though I may not agree with them I abide by them because they are my parents and they've done so much for me, it's not right if I don't listen to them. I feel I am very unique in that way. I often hear many of my friends complaining about their parent's demands and to my horror they disobey their parents. They use the excuse “it's my life, leave me alone!” and though I agree it's their life they wouldn't have it if not for their parents and all the hard work they put in to allow you to live a life where you have choices and opportunities.

I believe if you have a good relationship with your parents you have a good life but if you have a bad

relationship you are doomed to have a bad life. Your parents are the ones you work hard to impress with a bad relationship you no longer want to impress them and start slacking. Since you live with your parents if you have a bad relationship it often keeps escalating because you see each other every day and haven't had a chance to cool off from each other. My older brother had a bad relationship with my parents and I've seen firsthand how it can affect every aspect of your life. There was always uneasiness in the household, they made little eye contact with each other and seldom spoke to each other. If you have a bad relationship with your parents you feel alone because your parents are the ones you look toward for help but when relationships are bad you're alone. Bad relationships also affect the parents, with my brother I always remember my parents sad and disappointed with themselves that they couldn't talk to their son and have good times with him.

Your parents play a huge role in your life, they teach you invaluable lessons and how to live life, having a bad relationship ruins all of that and in the process ruins your life. I've seen from both the child's and parent's perspectives how much suffering a bad relationship can cause.

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“Children are our second chance to have a great parent-child relationship.” ~ Laura Schlessinger  
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The clothes you wear. The food you eat. The color of your bedroom walls. Where you go and how you get there. The people you hang with. What time you go to bed.

What do these things have in common, you're asking? They're just a few examples of the many hundreds of things that my parents controlled for me when I was a child. As a kid, you didn't have a say in very much that went on; your parents made decisions about everything from the cereal you ate in the morning to the pajamas you wore at night. And it's a good thing, too — kids need this kind of protection and assistance because they aren't mature enough to take care of themselves and make careful decisions on their own.

But that's just it, I'm no longer a kid, and they have to learn to realize that.

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“It is one thing to show your child the way, and a harder thing to then stand out of it.” ~ Robert Brault  
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Dear Dad,

I had such high hopes, but at the same time, the chances of you coming here for graduation was almost impossible from the beginning.

You are a good man. A truly good man with a huge heart. I'm not sure if it was the distance or the years that parted us, but either way, it's sad to acknowledge how things ended up. Maybe it was all for the better? After all, "things happen for a reason," don't they? If you came to my graduation, maybe you'd be too surprised to see that your baby girl is finally graduating. Not finally, but already graduating - thinking to yourself, where did the time go? Wasn't it just yesterday, when she was eight and we'd watch NBA games together on TV? When she was five and we'd play monkey tree every day after school? Or when she was three and I'd prop her on my shoulders and carry her around everywhere? Who knew how quickly things could change?

Dad, time flies. Sometimes, I can't even believe that I'm this old already. Just think about it - I'll be heading off to college in a couple of months and soon I'll be married off to some man. I'll be interviewing for job openings, traveling the world, and starting my own family. But I prefer not to think about the future, because it makes me wonder - where will you be then?

Don't worry, I still will always love you.

Love,

Your daughter

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"In every conceivable manner, the family is link to our past, bridge to our future." ~ Alex Haley  
~~~~~

"When I was your age I used to cook, wash the dishes by hand--because we didn't have a dishwasher in those days..." Be quiet. Please? "...walk 4 miles everyday to school, take care of my younger siblings, and study into the dark of the night with merely a little candle for light. I used to to....." I know, I know, you were wonderful. You were the embodiment of a good Indian child who respected her parents, executed diligent work ethic, and came consistently "First" in your class.

It is infuriating how parents constantly attempt to make their children a carbon copy of themselves or even better: their DNA-mutated-improved-twin. While the days are filled with how modern day children have it so "easy" and how spoiled they are, the nights are

congested with repetitious recitations of tales of their own childhood, where they themselves were perfectly good, well-behaved children who studied while the rest of their siblings and friends played -- the conversation almost always finishing with a "See? Now look, where I am....and where they are! I am the one that crossed the Atlantic to America, nah?"

Ha, baba, ha! You were amazing. What great feats you accomplished! Guess what? 4 words. I am not you!

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"Making the decision to have a child - it's momentous. It is to decide forever to have your heart walking around outside your body." ~ Elizabeth Stone  
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Silly me... I've forgotten what it's like to have two parents. I wonder what'd it'd be like to have both parents in my life... I can't imagine it at all. Though Christmas has lost its luster and Thanksgiving is without a complete family, I don't think I could go back to the seemingly picture perfect old days either. Since I don't have a complete set of parents, I'll talk about my "parental relations" about them separately.

Bless my mom who never got past the 7th grade in China because her family was so poor, and she's raised two beautiful children. Through all her stress and sadness, she finds a way to smile every day and though her body is physically breaking down from all the years of anxiety, stress, and labor, she keeps going. I always admired her for being so strong. I remember I told her, "Mom, how are you so strong?" She cried a little bit and said "I'm not strong at all!" I still think she is though, through all the s\*\*\* she went through as a little kid to now, still sticking through s\*\*\* for HER kids. She's usually very good about masking her pain. God I love her.

There's so many things that I have yet to learn! I did not know that my dad was the one who didn't want to divorce. So to compromise he made my mom sell our house and continuously wants my mother to suffer by supplying us with as little money as possible in his bitterness.

And yet I can't see him in that kind of light. I'll always see him as I did while I was growing up. How can the same person be so cruel? Why do I have to weedle money out of him because he refuses to pay more child support (\$300 is as much my mom spends in one Costco trip)? I am his child too. Why do I feel like calling him is a chore; in fact I actually forget to

communicate with him. Why can I not imagine him in my life anymore?

Oh yeah. Maybe because he forgot to mention he remarried, and though it was a few years back, I don't think I can ever forgive him for that.

I love him very much for how he treats me and loves me now because I know he misses me and wishes only the best, yet I cannot fully forgive him for the things he has done, the words he has said to my mother, the words said and left unsaid to me, the bitterness he can't shake off. In short, my relationship with my dad is hardly there. We talk sometimes, but it's mostly about financial needs. Sometimes I am very bitter about it, but all in all it's normal for me now.

I love my daddy from my childhood memories. And now I love just a familiar stranger.

Of course! I should include my stepmom. She's nice, doesn't speak English, so we can't communicate much at all, her broken English and my broken Chinese... But she always thinks of me and perhaps buys me a thing or two. It's nice that she tries! And I'm so very glad that she takes good care of my dad.

Might as well include my mom's boyfriend too. He's not really my parent (because I don't think they'll ever get married since they've been on and off for about 5 years) and we don't TALK about my life and he never provides "guidance" since I never ask for it, but he is THERE for me. He cooks food for me, he and I used to go running together, he buys me medicine and checks up on me when I'm sick, he gives me rides when I need them, he remembers all the things I tell him about my friends and stuff, and it's clear that he cares very much for me. He's not REALLY a fatherly figure since we don't go into the emotional stuff and he never TEACHES me anything really, but he is most definitely a prominent figure in my life and saw me growing up from the fourth grade till now, high school.

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"Having children makes you no more a parent than having a piano makes you a pianist." ~ Michael Levine  
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I looooooove my mom, honestly shes amazing. I hear stories from my friends complaining about their parents pressuring them and not letting them do anything they wanted to do because it didn't fit in their plan to attend Harvard and become a doctor or lawyer. My mom has always made my life about me. She gives me so much freedom in life to decide for myself what I want to do because she trusts that in the

end, ill be successful and happy. I love the fact that I can really do anything that I wanted to, but the only thing wrong with this is that the only thing stopping me from achieving my dreams, is purely my own failure. Other peoples parents force them to take necessary steps to become successful, but atleast they are guaranteed success. I may be guaranteed freedom, but I am not guaranteed success as I haven't been pushed by my parents to make sure that success is for sure in the cards.

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"If you have never been hated by your kids, you have never been a parent." ~ Bette Davis  
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Parental relations are a topic that I think has had a huge impact on my life and the well being of me. Its kinda weird I used to think of my parents as my friends for life and that they would always be there no matter what, but now I realize that my life is important to them, but more so that they want their values instilled in me. I was talking to my dad one day about some random stuff the usual views on life and whatever and the topic of futures came up. And to him, being a traditional dad, he was all for the traditional lifestyles. He wanted us to become engineers and to always listen to him, and basically he wanted to live vicariously through us. It was a small argument that brewed subsequently, nothing big or hostile, but it got me thinking of how much my parents really know about me. Do they really expect me to be like them and listen to them all the time? Honestly I don't and when they find out they just get pissed and say like "IS THAT HOW WE RAISED YOU?" and to that I don't know what to say. They were great parents, it's just that how can I even live under the same roof if you want to control my entire future and destiny. It makes no sense. And when I get upset with them, they ask, dumbfounded, "It's for your own good." How is constricting my life for my own good? My relationship with my parents has definitely deterred after high school since so many social pressures and other things have got me questioning why I listen to them. I know their intentions are good, but seriously, people need to live on their own and they don't seem to get it. Either way I know they're there for me, just that I don't know how they are going to react.

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"The informality of family life is a blessed condition that allows us to become our best while looking our worst." ~ Marge Kennedy  
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I guess you could say that my family is a little different from most - well in Cupertino anyways. They're more liberal than most, since the only thing they really want out of me is good grades and stay healthy. And besides that, nothing really comes to mind. They don't really care if I swear - as long as I'm not cussing like a sailor - and if I watch rated R movies or if I'm talking to guys. I can basically do whatever I want, as long as I'm doing good in school and not abusing their trust.

I didn't realize how different they were until I heard about other parents and how strict they are with their children. I know someone who's parents can't even watch a two second make out session with their daughter in the room, and I know people who have parents who check their Internet history and block sites. Those are probably the least significant problems that one could have with their parents, but for me, those are pretty big since I have so much freedom. And when I say the word "freedom," I don't mean that they let me do whatever I want just because they don't care much. It's exactly the opposite. They have made so many sacrifices for me, leaving behind all of our relatives back in our home country and taking jobs that have quite a couple inconveniences - for instance, my dad's job is in another state and I only see him on weekends now. This is better than before I guess, when I used to only see him once a month.

Sometimes it's hard for me to realize it, but I really do have great parents. They're relatively easygoing on most things, and literally everything they do is basically for my benefit. I feel bad when I overlook all the sacrifices they have made for me and get pissed over the one lecture they give me every now and then. I truly feel grateful to have them and I love them very much.

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"A baby is God's opinion that the world should go on."  
~ Carl Sandburg  
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You don't know what you've lost til it's gone. Cliché, I know. Maybe my situation overall is something straight out of the storybook. I've always associated the idea of children losing their parents only

to end up missing them to cheesy, overused plotlines for mawkish movies. Unlike my situation, the parents always come back, embracing their sobbing children in their arms where the family then lives happily ever after. That's what parents are supposed to do...to always be there for their children.

I waited for my father to come back from his fight with cancer—with death—but he never came out triumphant. Instead he simply laid there in his death bed, admitting defeat. My mom had since been taking longer stays at work to compensate for one less source of income. She's been stressed ever since. I can tell it in her face, the way she looks at me, desperately trying to cling to what's left of her family yet unable to face the idea of being a single parent. I've tried my best on my part. I've helped her cook and clean, but my lending hand has proved fruitless in my attempt to recover anything remotely similar to what our life had once been.

My best friend's parents have strangely been the one pouring their love and affection towards me after my dad's passing. They had welcomed me into their home, accepted me as one of their own. They have embraced me with open arms, constantly inviting me to their dinners and trips. When I have problems, I am comforted in knowing that I can sit down with my friend's mom and open up to her. I didn't know what I'd never had until I found it. They are the embodiments of the paternal love I once had but lost. They are my second parents.

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"Call it a clan, call it a network, call it a tribe, call it a family. Whatever you call it, whoever you are, you need one." ~ Jane Howard  
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I feel like my parents have been a driving force for all my achievements in life. They have always supported me, but at times they try to use me as a coloring book and try to make me what they want me to be. At these times, I have to stand up for myself. Still, my parents have shown me how to survive for myself and show how to make sure that what I'm doing is really what I want to do.

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"To nourish children and raise them against odds is in any time, any place, more valuable than to fix bolts in cars or design nuclear weapons." ~ Marilyn French  
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My relationship with my parents is okay. They're pretty nice people. They give me money and let me do anything as long as its not illegal. I'm pretty sure if they found out I did anything illegal, they'd probably just lecture me, then let me go to do whatever again. Sometimes I feel as though they do all this because they've given up on me. They've just accepted that I would never be as successful as them and that Im just too immature and lazy. I won't deny it...anybody who is born this handsome and awesome must have some flaw. I know this is weird and maybe I shouldn't but sometimes I wish they wouldn't always give in to what I ask. I think that if they refused me every now and then and said "oh, you can't go out until you finished your homework", I probably would try harder. I'd also probably feel like I could do more knowing that at least my parents didnt totally lose hope in me.

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"Your children need your presence more than your presents." ~ Jesse Jackson

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"Absolutely I do."

A classic line recited by the implausibly handsome character Jim Halpert from the widely loved comedy *The Office*, one of my personal favorite shows.

That line pretty much sums up the relationship between my mother and I.

For a long time its just been me and my mom. And from the beginning it has been me trying to refrain from imposing any extra burden or frivolous worry on her already stressed mind.

From the beginning I've always agreed. I never disagree with my mother, and the few times I have stepped out of my angelic persona, the consequences left me ridden with grief and guilt. Ending with the inevitable reminder that I am a burden. I never disobey my mother. I constantly try to appease her impossibly high expectations and live up all the hard work she has put in and all the sacrifices she has made raising me to be someone great.

I don't want to be a burden, but I can't do everything she wants—it's too much.

Sometimes I blame my father, the man whose presence is a mystery to me.

Sometimes when he calls, which is rare and short-lived, I want to just say 'f\*\*\* you'.

Sometimes it saddens me that there is no love in my heart for my father, but he's the one who has caused me to compromise my life for the benefit of the family he left behind.

Sometimes my mother's opinions and views are not those I agree with.

Sometimes she pushes me too far into adopting a world and life that I hardly recognize.

Sometimes I wish I didn't have to feign a smile and agree with her principles and plan for the future and then keep everything I feel bottled up inside me.

But in the end I always say

"Absolutely I do."

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"Parents can only give good advice or put them on the right paths, but the final forming of a person's character lies in their own hands." ~ Anne Frank

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Starting my second year of high school as a sophomore, the relations I had with my parents dramatically went down the drain. Freshman year, I used to talk to them daily having exciting and fun conversations throughout the afternoon. When sophomore year came by, the excess time I had left was used up for studying, studying, and more studying. After school when I was a freshman, my parents would always ask me how my day was. I would always have a nice conversation about how my day went and every detail of what happened. Now, I come home and I just go into my room and reply with "my day was fine". After a while, I realized that the reason why my parents kept asking the same question even though I gave a simple reply was that they did not want to give up the relations we had before.

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"Your family and your love must be cultivated like a garden. Time, effort, and imagination must be summoned constantly to keep any relationship flourishing and growing." ~ Jim Rohn

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When hearing the term 'parents' a variety of emotions can arise. Whether it be fear, love, or anger, it is undeniable that parents are vital to our lives. Parental relations, in terms of me, tend to be good, simply because I understand what my parents want and I try to deliver. I feel lucky that I can have both my parents, and I don't have a broken family like way too many fellow students do. It is sad to see parents value themselves over their children in so many cases, and divorce, remarry, date. Those with children fail to understand that them creating this chasm in their family affects the kids like nothing else can. Seeing your lifelines, your role models, your everything break into half is heartbreaking. It starts generating feelings of hate and rebellion inside a child and then they lash out on their peers. Parents leave an impact. One too many



students complain, at our school especially, about their “Asian” parents. The stress they put on them, their unreasonable actions, their irrationality. I for one, understand and can empathize, but we must admit that they do it out of love. They don’t burden us for their own good, but for our futures. Of course, at times it can be overwhelming and you are consumed with hate for your parents, but, without their push, how motivated would we be? As young adults we can motivate ourselves, but only to a certain extent, and after that it becomes the role our parents play, to push us forward. Though parents are hated, adored, and revered, it is clear that they make an impression and we can’t live without them.

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“A man travels the world over in search of what he needs, and returns home to find it.”

~ George Moore  
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Parents were always a touchy party for me. Before high school, they would always be on my back, telling me what to do, when do come home from outside events, and how I should conduct myself so that others would see me as the average “good asian kid.” After high school, nothing much changed: I was still told how to conduct myself, when to return from parties, and where to set my goals for my future. I can’t exactly say that I’ve been on perfect terms with my parents, but the occasional good things make it all worth it. Of course, they’ve done the normal Asian things, such as expecting that extra 1% to make a 99 a 100, but they’ve also let me go on a lotta things; sometimes, even such seemingly heartless people such as them can have nice sides. They understand what I went through, and try to help me if they’re content with my schoolwork. My relationship shouldn’t change too much with them, and I hope it stays that way. However annoying it may become at times, they’ll always be my parents.

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“Romance fails us and so do friendships, but the relationship of parent and child, less noisy than all the others, remains indelible and indestructible, the strongest relationship on earth.” ~ Theodore Reik  
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It all started when me and my siblings were little. My parents would speak to us in our native language, and we would respond “Si, mama.” or “No, mama.” because we had to. It made perfect sense to us back then. Well, it did for me. I don't know about my

siblings, but I was fine with being the obedient child. I was fine with setting the table, having perfect manners, making my own dinners, listening to my parents yell at each other, not telling anyone when they hit us. I was fine with all of that. However, as I grew older, I watched them drift apart. They argued more, they hit us more, they became passive-aggressive at best. It seemed like I was the only reason keeping them together. At this point in the story, I should point out that at this time, I was in 5th grade, and just beginning to see the world through my own eyes. I saw that *other* families didn't fight like ours, I saw that other kids weren't lying about where they got bruises, I saw that they didn't have to worry about their parent's arguments at night. Don't get me wrong, my parents loved and still love me and each other, but the only difference was that they were just less tolerant of deviations from norms. However, when I saw my parents and the way they acted around home, I began to wonder. Why couldn't we be more like my friend's families? Thankfully, around a year later, they promised to not hit us anymore. I couldn't be happier. My poor, ignorant mind believed that they would do what they said and not hit us. That we could finally be like the other families that I saw. And for years, they transferred their physical blows into emotional ones. What they believed to be encouragement only added stress. They stressed grades and extracurriculars, and there was only one of us that could be the perfect child. I'll give you a hint, that perfect child was not I, your dear narrator. No. Instead, I got the brunt of their disappointment and their anger. They wanted another perfect child. But all they got was me. When they went to dinner parties, they had something to brag about for each child except for me. And this. This had some effect on them. They wanted me to strive to be better. So I did. I pulled allnighters to write essays, stressed over grades, I began to favor textbooks and my laptop over my friends as I tried to meet their lowest requirements. It seemed for a while that the harder I tried to make them happy, the more disappointed they became. And this continued on a steady downhill slope until a couple weeks ago when it hit rock bottom. My parents finally broke their promise. Years of threats lead up to one night where the strings holding them back snapped. I have scars on my arms from her nails, and memories of spitting blood and pulling the braces out of my lip. This is what I get for trying to make myself happy for once. Because, you see, throughout my time here at Monta Vista, I've

struggled with self-esteem issues and depression due to having to live up to my sibling's accomplishments. I've always heard from my parents that I wasn't good enough, that I wasn't trying, that I had to be kidding them. On top of this pressure, I also had other people waiting on me. Waiting for me to finish a paper, or to put in some citations or something like that. Honestly, I didn't realize that I was depressed until I finally got a moment to myself and realized, hey. What happened to me? I was so busy trying to make everyone's life better and easier that I had forgotten mine. I was too busy trying to reach my parent's unobtainable expectations that I had lost what I truly loved in life. Now, they're happy with each other, but they couldn't care less about whether or not I was unhappy, or that I couldn't look in a mirror without insulting myself in some way. They had changed me into someone I was not proud of, and with this, I write my story. My mom sitting behind me, typing away on her computer, my dad sitting on the other side of the room. They couldn't care less about if I was writing this story. All they see is my grades. Or lack of good grades, I should say. Even as I'm writing this, tiny reminders to "work on that history grade" seep through the music that's playing, reminding me that I am, and will always be, the failure child.

Side note: they love me. They always have. All my parents want is for me to be successful and happy. And I want to leave you, the reader, with the final thought that although it may seem like they are horrible people, they still love me and have good intentions for their actions, they just have different ways of showing it.

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"It is not flesh and blood but the heart which makes us fathers and sons." ~ Johann Schiller  
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In all honesty, it sometimes seems like my parents just want to get on my nerves by placing unnecessary restrictions on my life. Yes, I've gotten all of the schpiels about not driving friends while I have a provisional license, not wasting time, and staying on top of my work; but those really aren't what drive me crazy. Their irrational, unwarranted demands are what get on my nerves. For instance, my mom seems to believe that sleeping is some sort of sin. I get a large amount of homework and I study a lot, all on top of keeping up with other non-school commitments I have, and living the life of a teenager. So naturally, I sometimes feel tired and need to rest. When I feel exhausted like this,

my instinct tells me that the best remedy would be to take a nap. So I do just that. Napping allows me to obtain much-needed rest and down time, as well as recharge and be able to work more efficiently afterwards. But my parents seem to think napping, or just sleeping in general, is taboo of some sort. So my mom proceeds to yell at me every time I take a nap. She says I'm wasting my time. Despite my explaining to her that I'm more efficient after napping, she has none of it. It's ridiculous. I just can't stand it at times, and I can't wait to go to college and leave the house. Another example is my parents' incessant nagging. Among these is to clean my room. Why is the state of my room any of their business? I'm the only one who occupies my own room, and its tidiness at any given time should be none of their concern. Who the hell cares if my bed isn't made? It's going to get messed up at night again anyway. Who cares if my school contents are spread out? What if I work better that way? Sometimes parents just need to lay off. I also detest how my parents hate any form of argument. Whenever I contest anything they tell me, they censor me and yell at me to be quiet. Yes, I know, it's totally bizarre. They think society is some place where everyone frolics through the flowers and argument doesn't exist. It pisses me off so much. I can't even speak my mind without getting in trouble. My parents may have the best intentions for my future, but sometimes they just need to take a step back and look at how they're going about facilitating things. Is it my life or theirs?

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"No success in public life can compensate for failure in the home." ~ Benjamin Disraeli  
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My family consists of me, my sister, my dad, and my mom. But as time passed, my sister left to New York and my dad's in Korea. I'm really sad since I can't have my quality time with my dad. I have everything planned out for when my dad comes, to do lots of activities during his short stay. But he is always too busy with his work, barely having any time to even sleep. He comes here about once every three months which is a long time. But when he comes home, it feels as if he was here all along. I always try to be nice to my mom, but she usually makes me mad for some reason. I feel embarrassed about how she treats me outside the house, like a little kid. I try not to be mad, but sometimes I just can't, like when I'm hungry and tired-- I become very angry easily. Even when I'm not, I feel angry towards her for no reason. It's very quiet at home

when it hits about five. We each do our own thing at our own time. I feel that I need to have a better relationship with my mom and dad.

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“The great gift of family life is to be intimately acquainted with people you might never even introduce yourself to, had life not done it for you.”

~ Kendall Hailey

~~~~~  
It's horrible how much time schoolwork and activities take away from time we can spend with our families. I can't count the number of times I've painfully declined my mother's offer to go out to dinner with "Err... I have a big test tomorrow. Maybe next time?" But her and I both know that when "next time" rolls around, I'll have an essay due at midnight, or an evening soccer game, or something else keeping me from enjoying a few hours with my family. Why do they get pushed to the bottom of my priority list? Because spending time with them is the only thing I can avoid doing without failing a test, or getting a zero on a homework assignment, or some kind of consequence.

However, these are such little consequences. A bad test score won't hurt me as much as looking back on my teenage years and realizing how much I neglected my family. I realize this, yet I can't bring myself to take a break from schoolwork since I know that a "Sorry, teacher. I didn't finish my project because I had family bonding" just doesn't cut it. I try to get my homework done and out of the way early, but there just aren't enough hours in a day...

Recently I came down with a fever. My mom was more than excited to come home from work and take care of me, and I was happy to be under her care. We ate food together and talked, and for a while I forgot about school and wished I could stay sick longer. Instead of doing homework, I lazed around the house and watched TV with my dad and brother - something I never do anymore. Isn't it sad that it took a sickness to get me to make time for my family? I'm finally realizing how big of a problem this has become, and all I want is to be able to look back on high school and remember the warm moments I had with my parents."

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“Things may change with us, but we start and end with the family.” ~ Anthony Brandt

~~~~~  
My relationship with my father is....well, complicated. But my mom is my best friend. One thing

I never understood was why having a daughter instead of a son was such a bad thing for my dad. It's like he only sees my younger brother and disregards the needs of all the other females in our family. I hated it, and still do hate it, when he gives my brother pocket money to buy food and expects me to somehow manage on my own. I hate it when he gives my brother extra meat at the dinner table, and I'm left with bones. I hate it even more when he screams at me when I ask my brother to do work, because it's apparently "my job" to do everything around the house. For this reason, I can't talk to him about anything personal. He thinks I can't get into college with a 3.9 GPA and expects me to get into Stanford like my sister. I wish he understood how hard it is to get that far. He shouts at me because I talk too soft. He shouts at me because I'm apparently too "weak" and "not competitive enough." He basically shouts at me for everything, but for my brother, he doesn't lift a finger. It's very frustrating and I initially wished really hard that I was a boy. What helped me overcome this in the end was my mom. She taught me how being a woman was a gift and daughters were never a burden to parents. Regardless of how my father behaved with me, my mother taught me that one of the blessing (and sometimes curse) of being a woman is patience. She taught me to wait for another couple of years and then I would be in college. But, to be honest, sometimes that isn't the solution to dealing with parents who you don't necessarily have a good relationship with. I sought help from counselors at school to deal with the stressful environment at home and all of them said that the key to solving such a dilemma was to talk. Unfortunately, I still haven't been able to talk openly, heart-to-heart with my dad because often times in my culture such conversations are seen as "talking back." But, I hope that in the future I will develop some form of courage to politely protest against his favoritism.

I guess the best part of having opposite relationships with my mom and dad is that I know right from wrong. I know that when I grow up and hopefully get married and have children, I'll know how to treat them equally. Although my father says that I need to learn from my mistakes, I've learned to learn from his mistakes as well. Relationships are delicate, they can be easily formed, but easily broken too. I've kept whatever relationship I have with my dad, but I know the one with my mom will remain strong.

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"Each generation revolts against its fathers and makes friends with its grandfathers." ~ Lewis Mumford  
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When I think about it, I feel like no one really understands how my family is. I mean, about a year and a half ago, my parents surprised me with informing me that we simply did not have the money to continue living on in this expensive area, Cupertino. Instead of moving me away from this place that has been my home for all my life, they decided to move me to my aunt's house, while both of them split off into different directions. My mother was to move to Taiwan to live with my Grandma, and my dad was moving to LA to live with his sister. In this situation, many might think that it would be cool to live more independently, not having to deal with their parents. To me, it was so different from that. Initially, I was overwhelmed with anger. Thoughts like "how could you leave me here? How could you abandon me? I'm only 15 and you expect me to live on my own?" would run through my mind constantly. This anger soon turned to sadness. "Why are they leaving me? Do I not make them proud? Do they not love me?". I just felt so lonely, so empty. But at the same time, I knew that I had to be strong for them. It was hard for me to accept, but I knew that breaking apart our family was the best option and I had to be strong to keep my parents confident in their decision. Whether I accepted it or not, I knew it was probably so much harder for my parents to leave me, probably the hardest thing they ever had to do in their life. For their sake, I had to be strong, seem happy, so that they wouldn't look back. Though I was still bitter about their abandonment, I missed them so much. I would constantly think about how I had missed out and neglected the two people that loved me more than anyone else. My parents were gone, and they weren't coming back. In the past, they were always there, supporting me in so many more ways than I ever realized. I wish I could have spent more time with them while they were still here. I wish I had loved more, thanked them more for all they had done for me. But now it was too late. My advice to you is: cherish your parents. Spend every moment possible with them because you really don't realize how much they mean to you until they're gone. Though I don't have the courage to say this to her, if I could tell my mom how I feel, this is what I would say:

*Dear Mom,*

*Despite that you live half way around the world, the little things you do for me make a huge difference to me. I couldn't have asked for anything more. I am realizing more and more how much I really miss you. It's really sad to think that we will probably never live under the same roof again because in reality I only have 2 more years left, then off to college and real life. I can't believe I really missed the chance to take advantage of living with you. I'm sorry its taken me this long to realize this, but I love you and wish that you could just come back and stay.*

~~~~~  
"Children need guidance and sympathy far more than instruction." ~ Anne Sullivan  
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They say one's childhood is what really shapes you for the future, and it's a given one's parents are a big part of normal childhood. Bad childhoods with bad parents usually lead to 'worse' children, and vice versa. People who usually receive sympathy are the ones with dead, abusive, neglecting, or divorced parents. Whether they do or not, these people can have a reason to be a little less perfect than other people.

On the other hand, I don't have any of that – my parents provide for me, are well off, are alive, and are married. Yes, my dad left my family when I was 3 to go work overseas, and yes my mom relies heavily on antidepressants and pain killers to go through the day. But that doesn't mean s\*\*\* to me, because this is become the way of life.

I don't even consider my mom my mother anymore, except through our physical link of genetics. I never file the emancipation papers (which I could've done very easily on terms of abuse) simply because, to put it nicely, I want her money and I want to finish school. I don't really have a problem with my dad, because I've accepted he cares more about his businesses than his own children. His visits back home are supposedly 'about me', when in reality he just needs to attend to business here. My parents are only married because being spouses allows them to be richer. They've filed divorce papers in the past, handed it to me, and asked me to pick mom or dad, only to stay married because of the advice from our financial advisor. My mom abuses me and my brother, my dad abuses my brother and my mom (but not me), etc. My mom goes to anger management classes (court order after being arrested for domestic violence), but that doesn't stop her

from beating me now. Ironically, the only reason why she isn't in jail right now is because I, along with my dad, lied to the police about her being an angelic mom who never beats anybody – it was only one time, the time she got caught after she called the cops herself to send me to rehab for being a 'druggie'.

Which brings me to how this all affects me.

Yes, I'll admit, when I was young this always traumatized me. But now, this is a part of life – broken hands, divorce papers, and so on. My personality is what some people call insensitive and blunt, while most people just know my reputation and not me personally. My parents' behaviors and actions has little by little, become a part of me. It has shaped me to what I am, and I will never be able to change that. Sometimes I wish people would know why I am the way I am, but at the same time I like people to think I have a perfect life. I'm far from perfect, but I can't really say that my parents are the reason for my imperfections. In the end, my 'revenge' on them is really to not give a f\*\*\* about what they say, and though people sometimes perceive that as being reckless, it's just really my way of coping for how much they have (note the past tense) affected me. For now, f\*\*\* them and live life to the fullest

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“Wherever I look, I see signs of the commandment to honor one's parents and nowhere of a commandment that calls for the respect of a child.” ~ Alice Miller  
~~~~~

Dear Dad-

I don't know where to start. So many things I'm angry about, so many things that make me just want to break down.

You used to always lift me up and spin me around. I used to run to the door every evening when you came home. Every summer morning, I used to walk you out to the car before you left for work.

What happened?

Stupid question. I know what happened.

I decided, one day, that I wasn't going to put up with your s\*\*\* anymore. I'm not okay with you calling me names or yelling all the time or slapping me. Whether or not you had reason to do or say the things doesn't make it okay. If you don't respect me, there's no way in hell I'm going to respect you. And now we're in this cycle... I don't give a flying s\*\*\* about you because of the way you treat me, and you treat me the way you do because I don't give a flying s\*\*\* about you. I made a promise, years ago, that I

would keep my mouth shut when we talked. Because opening up to you has never done any good- all that happens is you don't understand and it makes things between us worse. Besides, you're nothing like the father you should be. You don't deserve to learn about my true feelings.

And yet I had this hope that one day I'd tell you how I really felt and suddenly you'd understand what you did to me and you'd change. Of course that didn't happen. Nothing changed. You claimed our lack of a relationship was absolutely not your fault (the worst part is that you truly believe this). You said nothing about where we would go from here.

I knew nothing would change but it still won't sink in. Nothing changed. Nothing changed. Nothing changed. I feel like such an idiot for thinking it might in the first place, for thinking that one day you'd understand and suddenly become one of those dads whose heart breaks every time he sees his little girl shed a tear, one of those dads who vows to kill anyone who ever dares to hurt their daughters.

You hurt me so much, Dad. You broke me. I'm terrified that even if I grow up and have a successful career, I will never know how to love. You're the reason I worry everyday that I'll end up marrying someone like you, like Freud or whoever says daughters do. You're the reason I simultaneously want kids so dearly, so that I can love them like I wished you had loved me, and yet am horrified at the thought of screwing up my kids the way you screwed up with me without even realizing it.

And you know, I know I should be trying to fix this too. I'm not free of blame for what happened between us. I haven't been the perfect daughter, in fact, there have been times when I've been far worse. So I should be trying. But I can't bring myself to. Every time I muster up the strength and willpower to be the bigger person, you start lecturing me about how you'd rather not have a daughter than have one like me, every time you walk by and snap something at me in that disgusted voice, it makes me *sick*. I'm not even filled with anger at that moment- it's *hatred*. *Loathing*.

And then the next moment, I just don't care. I'm numb. That's the way it's been for a while. So where do we go from here? I don't know. Maybe, when I start getting ready to go to college this time next year, we'll realize how much time we have left and we'll try to change. But right now, I can't move on from what you've done and I can't rise above this and I can't find it in myself to reconcile with you, Dad, so the ball is in

your court.

- Your daughter.

~~~~~  
"What a child doesn't receive he can seldom later give."  
~ P.D. James  
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Parents are supposed to be the people who are always there for us, but as children we don't tend to realize that until a situation arises that we need them and only them. I have a good relationship with my parents now, but that hasn't always been the case. It was because I never saw how much they do for me and how much they have sacrificed to put me and my brother through school. They moved countries, and found jobs, and school areas that would make us better people. When I was in Middle School, I felt under the influence of many of my friends who talked about their parents, everything they did wrong, and why they were so unhappy. It was during 8th grade that I realized how important they were to me, when I went through something that no one else could help me through. That experience brought me closer to my parents, and ever since, I haven't lied to them, and let me tell you, the ease of not being burdened with lies is immensely relieving. I saw that they were the only people who would be there in good times and in bad and love us unconditionally. Even as we go through boyfriends and girlfriends who break our hearts, horrible teachers, pathetic friends, and tons of betrayal, they will always be there to love us and guide us in the right path. As in any good relationship, honesty is the best policy and I believe that's why my parents and I have such an open relationship. I feel blessed to have such a loving and understanding family.

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"There are two lasting bequests we can give our children. One is roots. The other is wings."  
~ Hodding Carter, Jr.  
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Parental relations, what could possibly be more important? Although our generation is seemingly incapable of effective communication, I think it is of utmost importance that we strive to maintain positive relationships with our parents. From Monta Vista especially, this usually becomes limited to discussions that revolve either around grades, or college. Now there's a topic that any student is just dying to speak of on a daily basis right? Wrong. The problem with the

current parental relations that I am aware of amongst my friends and relatives is that the kids always start changing. It harkens back to that poem "When Children turn to Cats" in that sense because the parents are usually unsure of how to adapt to their child's rapidly changing attitude. If we can't trust our parents, then who can we trust? Friends are a decent second option, but they are will never know you as much as your own parents. So I believe that every kid should strive to achieve that friendly level of communication with their parents so that they have a cushion to fall back on in times of need. I know from personal experience that your parents often have the wisest and most useful advice. Recently, my family was thinking of moving from Cupertino to Irvine, a city close to L.A. I was totally against that because I was going to have to leave all of my friends here. Everything that I had worked for in Monta Vista would've been lost, and this was my argument to my parents for not moving. It then astonished me that my dad could see eye to eye with me, and look at things from my perspective as well as his own. He calmly laid out the pros and cons of both scenarios before, and told me to take a stance. In the end, it all worked out to both of our favors as my father got a local job that is just as promising as the one that was offered in Irvine. Clearly, not having someone like my dad to fall back on for help would have destroyed my thoughts and might have lead to a bad start in a new high school in Irvine. That's why it is extremely important that all students try to maintain that positive relation with their most trusted friends, their parents.

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"No matter what you've done for yourself or for humanity, if you can't look back on having given love and attention to your own family, what have you really accomplished?" ~ Lee Iacocca  
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I think that my parents and I can at times argue a lot and I've had times when I've been so mad I've wanted to run away but then I remember that I have it better than a lot of other kids and at the end. I really love my parents because of all they have done for me. My parents divorced when I was like 5 and my mom remarried when I was like 10 but even through all of that my dad never ever ever missed a single birthday even if that meant flying across the country and he's always just been there for me, even when he doesn't live near and because of that he's just been the biggest role model to me. And my mom has always tried to be as understanding and she's given up a lot just for my

happiness so I guess that brought us closer together. My step dad is really different than my real dad. We argue a lot, and I would never have married him- I'm not trying to be mean, but I just don't get him in general. But he's a good person, and he has a really big heart I guess. Both my dads' act like mature men around each other, but they don't really talk. It's kind of weird, they only really see each other on my birthdays and I think that my stepdad kind of avoids my real one. My real dad doesn't really seem to care. I think that my parents' divorce did have a strong affect on me, but I've learned to just put it aside and keep moving forward. It kind of taught me how to stand up, and be a more independent person. The reason for their divorce was just that they weren't compatible I guess. Both of my

parents on the outside, look compatible, their values and they both worked hard to have strong careers and liked the same kinds of food and all that stuff- but when you really put them together it just doesn't work. My mom has been pretty good about it. She's always been really strong. She's kind of determined to get what she wants. Many people think that because my parents have split up, I'm spoiled and I get everything I want but that's not true. I do not get what I want just because my parents are divorced, and I really don't like it when people say that.

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"Always kiss your children goodnight - even if they're already asleep. " ~H. Jackson Brown, Jr..  
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## How to Enjoy Limbo—Navigating Parental Teen Relations

By Marialena Malejan-Roussere (LMFT)

Remember the terrible two's? Your sweet happy baby would melt into a crying dervish at the most inopportune times as she discovered the power of "NO!" That extreme change, from being a completely dependent entity to having a body that moves about freely, communicates with words, and exercises free will, happens again when children become teenagers. This time, you can't pick them up off the floor and cart them to a safe room. This time, you have to use your wits and remember that their behavior is not a personal rejection of you, this is a normal developmental phase.

Teens are in limbo, no longer a child, not yet an adult. Parenting a teen requires creativity, trust, communication and deep love. Here are a few points to remember when relating with your teen:

- Take a deep breath...

Risk talking with your teen, even in the face of rejection. Your teen will remember your attempts, not the conversations themselves.

- Take a deep breath...

Parent through choices. Resist barking orders and resist simply giving in. Giving choices within limits helps teens gain independence and learn from their consequences – both positive and negative. While it is important for your child to know your expectations and values, it is also important to respect them as growing human beings and the authenticity of their experiences. Respect their emotional experiences and acknowledge their reality, without being dismissive or minimizing the profundity of their choices because of their age. Remember your goal is to keep the relationship with your teen. Teens will not let you parent them without a relationship based on trust, mutual regard and respect.

- Take a deep breath...

Your teen will disappoint you. Most of the time your teen will have just dropped the ball in their journey to becoming a responsible adult, and not because they don't love you. Other times, to be who they need to be, which is different from you, they will have to disappoint you. When disappointed, feel the pain and learn to comfort it. Try saying "While that's disappointing, I know you love me and I can handle my disappointment."

- Take a deep breath –

Sometimes the most profound acts in a relationship are often the simplest. Make it common practice to say words like "I am sorry", "Please", "Forgive me", "I love you", and "Thank you" to your teen.

- Take a deep breath...

It is not about perfection. Teens need an adult who models for them what to do when they blunder, when they make a wrong decision, or are having to push through a difficult time. Practice emotional congruency and match what you say, to what you do, to how you feel. If you come home tired, say so. Indicate when you need time to yourself to recharge, and then make it a point to reconnect later.

- Take a deep breath...

Make it a point to have at least five positive, loving, affirming acknowledgments for every one negative, critical or constructive criticism you need to give your teen. See your teen. Notice their contributions. Empathize with



their feelings. Compliment them. Encourage them. This will create mutual respect and regard. And when you need to be firm – be firm, but loving.

- Take a deep breath...

Most parents excel at communicating love through acts of service and duty; you launder their clothes, provide nourishing food, drive them to appointments. Try also to use loving words, gentle touch, and spending quality time together. Listen without rushing to judgment. Although you may have a preferred method, stretch yourself to show your love and care in a variety of ways everyday. And remember that the teen years are just another phase, much like those “terrible twos” were--only longer!

*Marialena Malejan-Roussere is a licensed Marriage and Family Therapist with a private practice in Los Gatos. She specializes in working with couples and parenting support. For more information, a free consultation or to set up an appointment, contact her at 408-702-7429, or visit her website at [www.relationshipharmony.com](http://www.relationshipharmony.com).*

### **Resources from the Verdadera Staff and Professional**

[Get Out of My Life, but First Could You Drive Me and Cheryl to the Mall?: A Parent's Guide to the New Teenager](#) by Anthony E. Wolf

[Staying Connected To Your Teenager: How To Keep Them Talking To You And How To Hear What They're Really Saying](#) by Michael Riera

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## Parental Relations

September 2011

*Verdadera is a publication created by and for Monta Vista students for the purpose of instigating communication concerning the reality of high school within the community. Each month, an issue on a topic relevant to the lives of our students is sent home for reading by both parents and students. While we do not edit submissions, we aim to publish personal experiences, not opinion articles. Please utilize all the resources present and feel free to email comments and feedback.*

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