

# NEWSLETTER

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## parenting with RESPONSIBILITY

JANUARY  
2024

As teens and adolescents, our kids spend a lot of their time gaining independence from us, and that is certainly an exercise in trust. Can you trust your child? Can you trust those with whom they interact? Building up responsibility as a way to gain trust will help you in a couple of ways. First, making responsibility about one's character instead of simply one's duties changes the narrative. Second, focusing on how responsibility builds trust allows for conversation around many topics, including expectations as well as hopes for future independence and additional responsibilities.

**Sometimes our children will feel down, hopeless, or aimless. So how do you encourage responsibility, even when your child doesn't feel like doing anything? Well, the first thing is to talk about it. What things are motivating? What makes them feel stuck? Second, help them set a new horizon. If what they were working for now doesn't feel motivating, what can they set their eyes on in the future? How can you visually represent that in a way that can help motivate them to be responsible now so that they can have what they want later?**

### Questions for parents to consider:

- How do you establish trust with people?
- How do you establish trust with your child?
- How do your children see you follow through on your own responsibilities?

### Questions to ask your child:

- When are you responsible?
- When do you struggle with motivation?
- How does responsibility show your character? How is it more than just carrying out duties?
- Why is motivation important?

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## RESPONSIBILITY:

Proving you can be trusted with what is expected of you

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### **WEEK ONE:**

#### ***What is responsibility?***

The less responsible, dependable, and trustworthy you are, the less likely you will be to experience the freedoms you want now, and the choices you want in the future –like getting into and going to college, or getting and holding a job you enjoy. It seems kind of rough to say, but you’re only one irresponsible choice away from many of those doors slamming shut. On the other hand, showing you can be trusted means you can have more freedoms –maybe stay out later, be trusted to spend your own money, drive a car, or spend time with friends on your own.

### **WEEK TWO:**

#### ***I get it.***

Being responsible and proving you can be trusted starts with understanding what is expected of you. If you don’t have clear, agreed upon expectations, it will be pretty hard to prove you can be trusted with whatever the task is. What would it look like to establish clear expectations any time your trust and responsibility is on the line?

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### **WEEK THREE:**

#### ***Responsibility and devices***

Responsibility takes on a whole different meaning when it comes to electronics with the power of the universe in our pockets. Being responsible when you can cover it up, when it is an acceptable addiction, and when everyone else is being their worst selves is a very tough thing to ask of a teenager. So how do we do it? What does responsibility mean when it comes to device usage?

MENTAL HEALTH FOCUS

### **WEEK FOUR:**

#### ***The long view***

When you were little, responsibility was mostly about doing your chores or bringing a completed worksheet back to your teacher. As we get older, those responsibilities change, and the weight of them changes as well. It may seem like a long way away, but the decisions you make now and how you handle the responsibilities you have will impact the choices you get to make later in life. Think about the goals you have for yourself: is your trajectory right now getting you closer to that, or pulling you further away?

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