



# 5x5: Your 5-Day, 5-Minute Post-It Note Prep for Tech Talks with Your Teen

## Why Post-It Notes?

As a person who loves to plan, I've always loved Post-It Notes, but in recent years, I've found them to be incredibly helpful in my parenting, too!

A few years ago, my teen daughter seemed to be getting more sucked into her device and it worried me. We had great boundaries (thanks to our [family tech plan!](#)) but I could see it was taking up precious whitespace that used to be used for other activities and downtime.

We talked about using 30 minutes each day to do something she loves. She was enjoying hand-lettering, so I purchased some new art supplies for her and wrote a simple note.

After that day, I noticed she was picking up her art pens more and the device less. And more importantly, that little note stuck around in her room and our relationship stuck, too.



## Disconnect to Connect

Every day 18.7 billion texts are sent, 5 billion YouTube videos are viewed, 95 million photos are uploaded to Instagram, and 333 billion emails are sent and received—that's in one day!

In a world filled with endless digital messages, let's send a simple message to our teens to let them know they matter.

All it takes is a pad of Post-It notes, a pen, and some persistence.

## Five 5-Minute Preparation Prompts for Parents

**OVER THE COURSE OF FIVE DAYS, TAKE ONE FIVE-MINUTE ACTION EACH DAY USING THESE PROMPTS.**

1. **Get your Post-It Notes ready:** Read through the Post-It note prompts and start on your notes to your teen. You can do them all at once, or simply start with one today!
2. **Write down 10 things you love about your teen:** Get out a planner, notebook, or note-taking app. Just write what comes to mind and use bullets if that makes it easier. ;)
3. **Schedule your first tech talk:** Have a discussion with your spouse or partner and then a separate conversation with your teen about your desire to have tech talks with your teen. Remind your teen this is a precursor to gaining more access on a device and that it's your job as a parent to keep them safe. Schedule the first tech talk on the calendar at a time when your partner can tag team with other children/responsibilities, and coordinate with your teen. We've found Sunday evenings to be a good time.
4. **Watch Adam Alter's TED Talk: [Why Screens Make Us Less Happy](#),** starting at the beginning and stopping at 5:50. (The entire talk is only 9 minutes long and is worth watching, but we're sticking with our 5-minute promise!)
5. **Listen to five minutes of my interview with Collin Kartchner, [What About My Older Teens?](#):** Slide the podcast to the time 19:45 and listen through 25:00.

## Five Post-It Note Prompts to Help You Reconnect with Your Teen

**WRITING NOTES TO YOUR TEEN DOESN'T NEED TO BE COMPLICATED, BUT HERE ARE A FEW TIPS TO HELP.**

- Avoid instructing, teaching life lessons, or any "asks" on your notes. We're simply giving here.
- Use your teen's name, make the note about them—not you—by not starting with "I". (i.e. "You really rocked your calculus test!" is better than "I think you are so smart.")
- Be specific. (i.e. "Thanks for always being willing to pick up your sister from dance." is better than "Thanks for helping out.")

It's time to pull out your Post-It notes! I love this activity because it's so simple and effective.

Based on my experience as a teacher, youth volunteer, and parent, here are five things every teen needs to thrive. You can use these to guide your five Post-It notes to your teen!



1. **A cheerleader**—teens need someone to cheer them on. They need to know you are on their side no matter what. Are they trying out for a team? Navigating a tough friendship? Have a test this week? Offer some encouragement and praise!

2. **Acceptance**—teens need to know we accept them as they are. Sure, you might wish they dressed differently, had different friends, or responded differently to your questions and comments, but today you'll set that all aside and just love them for who they are. Let them know that what matters to them, matters to you.

3. **An inside joke**—teens need to laugh! Laughter can lighten their mental load and provide healthy endorphins. If you have an inside joke or favorite memory, now's the time to revive it. If not, your best silly knock-knock joke can do the trick. This "insider" connection also gives your teen a sense of belonging—something every teen needs.

4. **Affection**—Never underestimate the power of a simple "I love you." Your teen still needs to hear it and read it. Later in the day, squeeze in a hug (side hugs, fist bumps, and wrestling count!). Human touch is essential for brain growth and mental well-being.

5. **Gratitude**—If you're like most parents, it's easier to notice what isn't getting done (messy room, homework, overflowing garbage), but gratitude begets gratitude. More gratitude=less anxiety, depression, higher grades, less envy, and more connection. Write your teen a note thanking them for something, no matter how small it may be!

You did it! You've laid the groundwork to start Tech Talks with your teen. This is the beginning of many conversations and you may get some pushback, but that's okay!

## Next Steps for Tech Talks with Your Teen

If you are ready for next steps with more guidance, our course [Untangling Teens & Tech](#) was designed to help. As a parent of three teenagers, I've tried and tested (and am still using!) everything I share in the course.

If you go at this alone, I recommend having your teen read a book about technology, decide on some boundaries together, stick with a kid-safe phone until they are really ready for more, baby step into more freedom on a device, and create a parent-teen pledge together.

I'd love to help you tackle tech, reconnect, and give your teen a sense of self stronger than any screen. You don't have to wonder where to start, play tech-tug-of-war, or worry if your teen will be able to rise above the dangers and pressures of a digital world. You'll know you've done your part and when sticky situations arise, you'll know what to do.



**Your teen needs you on their team now more than ever!**

