

## Building Impulse Control

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The ability to delay gratification, or to wait for something you really want, is impulse control. One groundbreaking study out of Stanford University found that impulse was linked to greater life outcomes, like higher test scores and higher academic achievement. Impulse control also helps with achieving goals, developing perseverance, and making responsible decisions. Your teen's impulse control can be seen in many scenarios. You can see it when they decide to turn off their phone before bed instead of staying up to text with friends. It's when they finish all their homework before hanging out with friends. And it's there when they decide not to skip a class, resist peer pressure, or step in to stop friends who may be bullying another teen.

Let your high schooler know what you expect of them. Clear expectations and boundaries help your teen understand your expectations and can help them resist temptation in order to stick to those expectations. For example, if you never talk to your teen about curfew, drugs and alcohol, or grades, they might not know what your family deems acceptable. Of course, just because your teen knows what you expect does not mean they will always act accordingly, but communicating what is acceptable is a good way to help them learn boundaries. Education consultant Jennifer Miller recommends also talking to your teen about their own boundaries and limits. Listening to what they think is right for them in different scenarios can help your teen identify what works for them.

Talk to your teen about patience and impulse control. When people are patient, they don't act on their impulses and they are better-prepared to make decisions calmly. They are also more patient and accepting of their own challenges and limitations. Patience is an essential skill for your teen to develop. If you talk to them regularly about the importance of patience and why it's necessary to be patient with himself or herself and others, they will be more capable of handling stress and making good choices. New York City-based teacher Anne Morrison suggests helping your teen come up with strategies to help them with their impulses. For example, they could take a breath and count to ten before responding in a heated discussion. Or, they might have a responsible friend they know they can call when they're feeling tempted to try alcohol or engage in risky behaviors.

Adapted from: <https://www.today.com/parenting-guides/building-impulse-control-teens-t179028>



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