

**CAUTION! KEEP OUT! CAUTION! K**

**Secret C. I. A. .... Confidential. Isolated. Annoying.**

*“Personally, I believe there should be a direct link between the amount of responsibility, consistency, and honesty that kids show and the amount of privacy they’re allowed to have in their rooms.” James Lehman, MSW*

Your teenager has probably told you that they deserve privacy at least once before. If not, wait for it. You may also see your teenager exchanging secrets with their friends or suddenly have to step away to discuss a *very serious matter*. These things are normal. So the question is, should you be concerned? Should you investigate to see what kind of activities your teenager is involved in? I mean after all, *somebody has to*.

As their parent/guardian, you have the right to know who they are talking to as well as where they are going and with whom. Even if your teenager is responsible, wanting to know where your child is going/what they are doing, and what time they’ll be home is not being nosey, its parenting. Unfortunately, many young people have a broken sense of entitlement, feeling they “deserve” privileges as well as material things. Many will feel they deserve privacy. If they are living in your house, and you are paying the bills, it is not too much to ask that they show basic consideration by letting you know of their coming and going.

Generally, there are a couple of ways to get this information. You can either choose to do so through regular conversation or by demanding them to tell you, though the latter is more detrimental to your relationship. You don’t have to be your child’s best friend, but fostering good communication and laying the groundwork for developing a mature relationship, is beneficial as they grow into adulthood.

*“The years when kids are between 13 and 18 years old are an essential time for parents to stay involved,” Amelia M. Arria, Ph.D.*

This aspect of the teen age years, the secrecy and times of withdrawing, can be frustrating and downright annoying. Some parents, sensing a loss of control over their teens' behavior, crack down every time their child steps out of line. Others avoid all conflict for fear their teen will push them away. You don't have to do either of those things. It's about finding a balance between your teen adhering to house rules and the supervised freedom they can enjoy when they comply. You can be an affective, involved parent who understands that your teenager desires a social life. Don’t let the media tell you otherwise. The media doesn’t know your child, that’s your job.

Hang in there. Your teens are worth pushing through this tough time.