

Parenting Adolescents:

The following passage by author Michael Riera (2012) was excerpted with permission from *Uncommon Sense for Parents with Teenagers, Third Edition*:

*Until this point, you have acted as a “manager” in your child’s life: arranging rides and doctor appointments, planning outside or weekend activities, helping with and checking on homework. You stay closely informed about school life and you are usually the first person your child seeks out with big questions. Suddenly, none of this is applicable. Without notification, and without consensus, you are fired from the role of manager. Now you must scramble and re-strategize; if you are to have meaningful influence in your teenager’s life through adolescence and beyond, then you must work your tail off to get rehired as a consultant.... As a consultant, you offer advice and give input about decisions when you are asked. Otherwise, you’ll lose your client. You don’t garner the automatic praise and admiration that you did earlier. And, when your client asks for advice, you need to make sure that she really wants it. Sometimes, more than anything else, she simply wants your reassurances that she’ll figure it out herself. Sometimes she will temporarily lose belief in herself and ask to borrow your belief in her for a short while. Offering advice is not helpful when the real problem is the teenager’s lost belief in herself. A rule of thumb is not to take your teenager’s request for advice too literally until the third time. Nobody wants a consultant who tries to take over the business. What you are doing is not doing—you are waiting, but not abandoning. As a consultant, you must also save your “power plays” for health and safety issues; everything else is negotiable on some level. Skipping a biology class is definitely not on a par with driving a car after drinking alcohol. Finally, at this stage in your relationship, you are no longer the focus of your child’s praise and admiration; rather, you are often the scapegoat for the confusion about what it is to be an adolescent. As a manager, you were quite content to take their feedback personally, as a reflection of you; as a consultant, you must learn to not take most of their feedback personally, since it is often more about them than about you.*