

WHAT ABOUT CURFEWS?

To the teen: you are at an age where you want more freedom. We want that too, but freedom has a cost: responsible behavior.

Then, question to ask teen:

“how would you like to be setting your own curfew by 16?” (or 17 or 18 depending when you apply this principle)

This is how:

- Your current curfew is 9PM
- If you do not violate that curfew for 6(*) months, it will move to 9:30PM
- After 6months if you do not violate the 9:30PM curfew, then it will become 10PM, and so forth
- Violation of curfew means:
 - not 1 (one) minute after for **any** reason (**any** means any, that is, there will be NO excuses including such things as: roadblocks, closed road, traffic jams. You must leave for home allowing enough time for these possible occurrences)
 - there is only one curfew clock, the microwave (no seconds to be argued about)
 - violation simply means the 6 month period starts over
 - by 16 you could be setting your own curfew or still have a 9PM curfew. It is up to you.

(* time frame is certainly your discretion. The more responsible the teen has been the shorter the time frame. The less responsible a teen has been, the longer the time frame to prove they are responsible.)

Another good leverage point is: driver’s license. “You expect to get your permit and then your license at 16. We expect responsible behavior at home and school and if we do not see responsible behavior we will NOT sign for the permit.” Major leverage point for parents.

The concept is encouraging responsible behavior and the burden for that is on the teen. They make choices while being aware of the possible outcomes. If they do not meet expectations, the outcome is on them, not you.

Now the parent’s big worry: will a curfew cause my teen to drive crazy to get home in order to make the curfew? Does this put them at greater risk for speeding? A ticket? An accident? Yes, that is a risk. With teen drivers these are always a risk. The alternative is no curfew, just a ball park time frame? Calling to say they will be 10 minutes late is acceptable, occasionally, not as a routine. And then they had better be home in 10 minutes. Also any incidents of speeding and tickets results in a much earlier curfew (5PM) and they must start there to regain the lost privilege. Reckless, irresponsible behavior has bigger consequences.