

# Navigating Bedtime & Electronics Battles with Your Teen

Scan this code to listen to [DECODE Project Podcast episode #19: Navigating Bedtime and Electronics Struggles with Your Teen](#).



Also, take a listen to episode #25: [Helping Your Teen Towards Change](#) and episode #26: [When Teens Aren't Ready for Change](#)



## Tip #1: Avoid Power Struggles

- Remain neutral and avoid a power struggle at all costs
- Sometimes doing and saying nothing is the best strategy for that moment
- Use playfulness and humour
- Allow for natural consequences (ex. your teen is tired the next day)
- How you approach the interaction depends on what has been discussed beforehand and the current state of the relationship
- Offer help if appropriate but anticipate push-back and avoid common traps (threatening, nagging, saying too much, yelling, lecturing, going into fix-it mode)
- Remember the bigger picture goals: to maintain connection, to keep the lines of communication open, and for your teen to learn how to self-regulate

## Tip #2: Create a Better Plan with Your Teen

- Have a conversation when everyone is calm
- Remember how hard putting away electronics and power down for sleep can be (especially for teens!)
- Remain curious, listen much more than you talk, and drop the subject if you are getting any resistance from your teen





## Tip #2: Create a Better Plan with Your Teen (Con't)

*How to*

- Open up the conversation. *"We've been getting into some rough interactions around bedtime and devices. I'm nagging you because I'm concerned but it's not helpful. Can we figure out a better plan?"*
- Before making any suggestions or making a plan, just be curious. Listen and stay as quiet as possible. *"What makes it hard to get to bed/turn off electronics?"*
- Then, reflect back how difficult the situation is. *"I forget how hard it is when [all your friends are still online/this is the only time you have for some freedom/electronics are designed to be so addictive/you don't feel sleepy/you're dreading going to bed because you can't fall asleep/you're not sure what else to do/you don't know how to power down]."*

### IF YOUR TEEN DOESN'T SEE THE PROBLEM OR ISN'T READY

- State your concerns briefly and in a neutral way, then leave it for now: *"I'm worried you're not getting enough sleep and [insert your main concern here]. Let me know if you want help."*

### IF YOUR TEEN IS OPEN TO MORE

- Ask what they think would be helpful and what they think is reasonable regarding limits
- If it's an issue of not feeling sleepy or not being able to sleep, take a look at [Why Can't I Sleep & How Do I Get Sleep on Track?](#)
- Discuss potential strategies (ex. reminders, alarms, a wifi cut-off time for the entire family, device-free zones in the house, apps to control internet usage)
- Anticipate challenges and discuss how to best approach the situation in the moment
- Set up a 1-week experiment during which they will be completely in charge of when they put away electronics and when they go to sleep. This gives them the chance to show you they are ready for more independence. You will not remind or nag. Set expectations (ex. that they wake up on time, get to school, and follow-through on their responsibilities). Have a discussion about what they think is reasonable after 1 week if they are/are not able to follow-through with these expectations.



## Tip #3: Invest in Connection

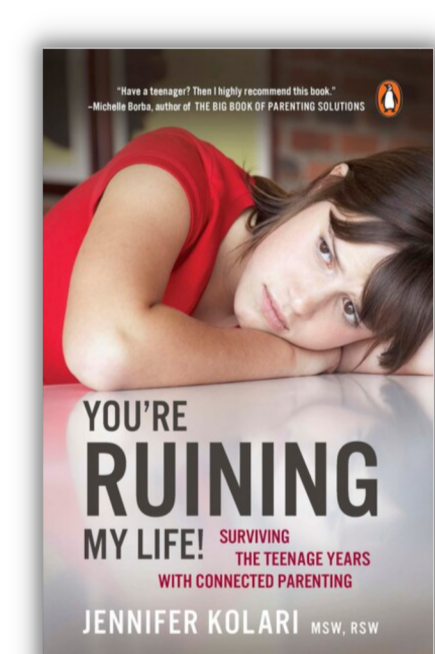
- Without connection, you can't have influence,
- Conflict with parents is expected and developmentally normal in the teen years.
- It is really easy to become disconnected so a proactive approach is key.
- Pick your battles: limit nagging, lecturing, correcting as much as possible.
- Respect their need for space.

## Ideas

- 1:1 time: Brainstorm activities that your teen enjoys. Think of things you used to do or new things you'd like to try together. Schedule weekly dates and/or carve out 15 minutes a day to spend with your teen.
- Use technology to make small, regular connections: Start a family group chat. Share interesting articles, funny YouTube videos, TikToks, or memes as a non-intrusive way of keeping the lines of communication open.
- Find ways of laughing and being playful with your teen. Find a funny TV series you can watch together.
- Look for the good, be curious, and learn about what excites them: Ask questions about what interests them. Get to know their world. Play video games with them.

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**Is your teen not interested in making changes to their sleep?**

Take a listen to DECODE Project Podcast episode #30:

[5 Tips to Help Your Teen Sleep Better \(21:26\)](#)

For more parent resources, visit more at [decodeinsomnia.com/parents](https://decodeinsomnia.com/parents).