

Q: *Dear Dr. Trivedi - I saw that recently you had answered a question sent in by a teenager like myself. I am 15 and lost my mother about 3 years ago in a car accident. She meant a lot to me and I was very close to her. I didn't have any of the conflicts most of my friends had with their mothers and considered myself lucky. I have an older sister who has moved away to college and doesn't like to keep in touch with us. The problem is that since my mother passed away, my father has become very distant. He was always on the aloof side but having mom helped as she would bridge the gap and help us understand him. He's a great dad but I don't know how to reach him. He's hurting, I'm hurting, but he doesn't talk to me. I am worried about him. What can I do to reach out to him?*

Roopa from Miami

A: Roopa, you show great inner strength in your question. Your deep emotional maturity is evident from the fact that you had a non-conflicting relationship with your mother at a very young age. On the contrary, due to his aloof nature, your dad is very distant emotionally and is reluctant to express his sentiments. It is often true that people who tend to be aloof and appear to be cold emotionally, are actually uncomfortable managing emotions. As a result, they tend to suppress emotions rather than express and work through them. If this sounds like your dad, you should consider the following approach with him.

Allow time to develop an ongoing dialogue with your dad about matters that you are both able to freely express your feelings about. Building such a relationship with your dad will be the foundation for future emotional connection for both of you. Remember, for someone who is uncomfortable expressing emotions, as most men can be to one degree or another, time must be allowed to develop a comfort level in speaking about events that are emotionally heavy. You want to encourage dialogue without being pushy.

If you are accurate in gauging that he's hurt-

ing, you will meet with success with this slow and steady approach.

You are likely to remind him of your mother which can prove a source of comfort in itself. Now that you are older, you can relate to your shared loss in a mature way. This would allow him to deal with a side of his emotional life that he may have not found the right time nor right person to share with.

At the same time do not get disheartened if you encounter difficulty initially. Be honest in your intentions and carry your mother's positive spiritual energy as your guide. You are sure to succeed.

Q: *Dear Dr. Trivedi - I have a ten-year-old son who is beginning to follow rock and roll music groups and singers. Initially, we*

A:



Kartik, you raise a question that many among us with children encounter daily. What you have found to be foreign and repulsive is exactly what your son is identifying with passionately. Your task is to guide your son towards your thinking or guide your thinking towards accepting your son's views.

The answer lies in a compromise between the two views. 10 is too young for exposure to such music but it may be too old already to forbid your son to listen to certain music.

You want to make the dialogue less about the choice of music and more about the bigger picture of life. Accepting your son as he is now will help build a foundation for your future relationship.

relationship.

What he is exposed to in song only at age 10 is likely to require mature guidance in several years. Having an open relationship will give him a balanced view of life from your perspective. You must not make him feel rejected. You must not lose his trust and respect as you present the opposing viewpoint. Using his music as a platform for exploring other forms of music can weave a relationship that lasts for years.

Mutual respect is the key to protecting your concerns and allowing your son's individuality to develop freely.

Dr. Trivedi is a Board-Certified Psychiatrist. He treats children, adolescents and adults. Please visit www.MINDvantage.com for more information.



were very amused when we saw him getting into music and listen to it with such passion. Recently, I took the time to actually listen to some of the lyrics in these songs and was horrified by their graphic nature and the violence they contained not to mention how inappropriate they are. If I forbid him from listening to this music, I am afraid that he will find other means to listen to it while he is with his friends. Another problem is that all his friends listen to such music and he finds it unfair when I tell him not to. He wants to know why he is being brought up differently. What can I do to explain that this can have a harmful effect on him or should I keep my trust in how we have brought him up and let him make his own decisions? I just feel that 10 is way too young!

Kartik from Riverview