



HOW TO BE COOL WITH PARENTS

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For my mother, the day doesn't officially begin unless she's made a scathing remark about the "deplorable" (her words, not mine) state of my health. Her day begins at the breakfast table, where she urges me to exercise regularly to stay fit, meanwhile leaving monstrous helpings of *paratha* and egg omelet on my plate. "You're too skinny!" she screeches, to which I reply, for the umpteenth time, "I'm not skinny, *ma*. I just have high metabolism." As always, the message fails to reach home. I look beseechingly at my father, who mouths a silent "leave me out of it". At this point, I'm frustrated. A fight ensues, mother gets the last word (surprise) and I storm out of the dining room.

Sounds familiar?

The relationship with our parents is often a tough one – an emotional obstacle course riddled with challenges. Particularly during the turbulent teenage years, we begin to think, feel and act differently. We spend more time exploring the world, as our life outside the family develops. We meet and befriend new individuals, sometimes against the better judgment of our parents. Conflicts arise as strong opinions and views develop, at times opposing the values and principles held dearly by our parents. We will say and do radical things just because. Family fades to the background as we spend an increasing amount of our time on the phone or on social media.

Needless to say, we love and adore our parents, in spite of the petty disagreements and senseless squabbles. Certain things will be perpetual constants – mother will always complain about the state of your hair whilst berating you for being obsessed with the way you look, whereas, father will peek over the newspaper periodically to ask you about school

and grades. No matters how exasperated you feel sometimes, admit it, you love their little quirks. Just like any relationship, the one with your parents must be built on mutual respect and easy communication.

Easier said than done, right? Find out for yourself.

jokes or even watch an Ananta Jalil movie together. When it comes to parents, laughter is the best policy.

Tell them what bothers you.

No matter how much you love your parents, certain things they do will annoy you. Instead of holding onto these issues and fostering resentment, try talking to

Express your appreciation.

Yes, your mother may be a scrooge that time of the month when you ask for your non-existent pocket money, but she never fails to make you a steaming mug of coffee the night before an exam. Although it may sometimes be difficult to communicate with your father, but he did buy you that Xbox you had been dreaming about as a birthday present. Take a moment to express your appreciation for all the things they do for you.

Earn your wings.

Tired of being treated like a kid? It's time to show your parents that you've grown into a mature, responsible adult. Instead of spending your hard-earned tuition salary on an overpriced pair of shoes, take care of the grocery-shopping every once in a while. Not only will you earn their respect, it shows that you are capable of handling your finances.

Utter those three magical words.

Now that you've completed steps 1, 2, 3 and 4, what more could your parents want, right? WRONG. Although this may seem like the most elementary advice that anyone could possibly give, it's also the most ignored. Go on, tell them you love them. Don't be shy.

So, back to our ritualistic morning row: I storm out and slam my door shut. Silently seething, I vow never to set foot in the same room with my mother again. Yet, the little voice inside my head knows I don't really mean it.

I return home after a busy day only to be greeted by her complaints of how I'm always late.

And then I hug her.

Although briefly rendered speechless, she quickly regains her composure and calls me an idiot for hugging her in dirty clothes.

But she smiles. Meanwhile, my father rolls his eyes and goes back to watching the evening news.



Have a friendly approach.

Talk to your parents as though you're talking to a friend. This does not necessarily mean that the conversation should be limited to the BMW M3 or Kim Kardashian's baby, East-West (or is it South-West?). Explore topics of mutual interest: national events, current issues, sports, movies, music, politics etc. Establish a friendly banter, crack a few

them. For example, if mother keeps calling you every 20 minutes to check on you, tell her that it's starting to hinder your concentration during classes, and while you love that she cares, you can't afford to let it affect your class performance. Set a time or decide on a certain number of calls per day, something that's convenient for both parties. The key is to express your views with respect and affection.