



Moving from YOU SHOULD to SHOULD YOU?

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“You should do this.” or...“What do you think you should do?”



Which do you think is a more effective way to teach today's young people how to make good decisions? “You should do this.” or...“What do you think you should do?”

It's funny how often parents, mentors, and youth pastors end up becoming the voice of “you should” or “you should not” in a young person's life.

“Don't listen to that song, it's bad.”

“Don't drink alcohol, it's bad.”

What are these kids going to do when they get on their own... call us up and ask us what to do? What if, instead of telling young people what to do, we began helping them learn to make decisions by asking them, “What should you do?”

Let's say we hear our kids listening to a song we are concerned about. What is the most effective way to get our kids thinking about the message of this song? We could stand up on our soapbox and start whining about how dirty today's music is and ban our kids from streaming it. If our kids like the song, do you think this approach will get them to open up about the song, or clam up?

What if we asked them questions about the song? What did he say he likes to do? How many young people today believe that? Is that true? How do you think that's working for him? Questions help us move from monologue to dialogue and get them talking. Furthermore, they require our kids to come up with the conclusions themselves. After all, some day very soon they are going to turn 18 and have to do this on their own. Are you equipping them for that day?

We just need to lead them to discovering the answer for themselves.

My wife and I have found that this method of asking questions works much better with our kids. One of our kids in particular, is like Gus from the movie *My Big Fat Greek Wedding*. The only way to get Gus to do something was to make him think of it himself. You might remember Toula pointing this out to her mom:

Toula Portokalos: Ma, Dad is so stubborn. What he says goes. “Ah, the man is the head of the house!”

Maria Portokalos: Let me tell you something, Toula. The man is the head, but the woman is the neck. And she can turn the head any way she wants.

You might remember the scene where they sat down with Gus and asked him for advice about who should work at the travel agency, while all along they knew the answer. They just needed Gus to come up with the answer for himself.

Many of our kids can be just like Gus. We just need to lead them to discovering the answer for themselves. We do this by presenting them with truth and asking questions. We do this by moving from “You should” to “Should you?”

Which method do you use?

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