

WORDS THAT BUILD
STRONG RELATIONSHIPS WITH
your adult children
(And make them want to hug your neck)



1. "I'm so proud of you." That is probably the number-one accolade your adult child wants to hear from his or her parent.
2. "You're such a great mom (dad). You're doing a great job raising your kids."
3. "You're so smart. I would have never thought of that!"
4. "I have confidence that you'll make a good decision."
5. "Your home is so warm and inviting."
6. "How did I get such a great son/daughter? I always knew you'd be an amazing adult."
7. "You are doing such a good job at work. I know they are glad to have you."
8. "If you ever need any help, just let me know. I'm here for you."
9. "You're making such a difference in the lives of the people you encounter."
10. "That's interesting. I've never looked at it that way before."



11. "I heard such and such on the news today. What do you think about it?" Let them know you would like to hear their views on various issues, but never say theirs is wrong and yours is right.

12. Be respectful. Talk to your adult child with the respect you would your best friend. If not, don't say it, or say it in a different way.

13. Think before you speak. This is the rule of thumb for all of verbal communications. Ask yourself, How would I feel if my mom or dad said this to me?

14. Become a master listener, showing that you are interested in what they have to say and willing to learn from them.

15. Talk to your adult child as an equal. Never talk down to him or her, as if you're the expert.

16. Whether it's daily or weekly, communicate with your adult child regularly. When you've laid the groundwork for a good relationship, it will be easier to tackle difficult conversations.

17. Look for common interests or activities and do them together. Then use that as a springboard for fun conversation.

18. Find a good time to talk. Avoid work hours or weekend nights.

19. Consider your intentions before you share an opinion that you know is opposed to theirs. If you are trying to change his or her opinion, then it's best to keep quiet.



20. If the adult child makes it clear that he or she doesn't want to talk about certain topics, then don't bring them up. Respect their wishes.

21. Be mindful of timing when bringing up sensitive subjects. We all know that there is a time to speak and a time to be silent (Ecclesiastes 3:7).

22. When listening to an adult child voice a problem or difficult situation, rather than offer you opinion or advice, ask good questions to help him or her come to their own solutions. Such as, "What are the pros and cons if you choose option A?" "What do you think is the best way to handle the situation?" You might be surprised that their solution is much better than what you were thinking. If not, they'll figure it out. However, if they ask your opinion, give it. However, consider saying, "what I would do is..." rather than "what I think you should to do is..." If you truly have no idea, don't feel like you have to give a solution because you're the parent. Simply says, "I honestly don't know what I would do, but I will pray that God will give you wisdom and direction."

23. Be sensitive to what is important to them. If they fight for animal rights, don't talk about your new animal fur coat.

24. Tell your adult child what you appreciate about him/her, what you admire about him/her, or what you have learned from him/her.

25. Keep phone calls, texts, FaceTime, or any other forms of communication as positive as possible. Avoid sharing all the negative family news, aches and pains, community problems, or other negative chatter that he or she doesn't need to know about. If the phone call is enjoyable and uplifting, the adult child will be more likely to call.

WORDS THAT DESTROY
RELATIONSHIPS WITH
your adult children
(And make them want to run for the hills)



1. Don't tell them how to raise their children. Those precious little ones are their children, not grandma's.
2. Don't remind them of the way you raised them, such as "I would have never let you get away with that."
3. Don't be rude . Don't allow a family connection to be an excuse for rudeness or lack of respect. Talk to your adult child with the respect you would any other adult. When speaking to him or her, ask yourself, Would I speak to a friend that way? If not, don't say it, or say it in a different way.
4. Don't jump in with solutions and ideas to try to solve his or her problems. Rather, be a sounding board and ask good questions.
5. Never share a private conversation that you've had with your adult child with someone else.
6. Don't take it personally if the adult child doesn't have time for a long, drawn-out discussion on any particular day.



7. When adult children call, don't say, "I was wondering when I was going to hear from you" or "I haven't heard from you in a long time." Avoid any statement that makes him/her feel guilty for not calling earlier.

Here are some relationally destructive statements to avoid.

8. "I told you so."

9. "You should have listened to me."

10. "Someday you'll see it my way."

11. "Wait until you have kids. Then you'll understand."

12. "When are you getting married?"

13. "Your biological clock is ticking. When are you going to give me a grandchild?"

14. "Have you gained weight?"

15. "Have you started exercising yet?"

16. "Have you been going to church?"

17. "Have you been reading your Bible?"

18. "What were you thinking?"



19. "When are you coming to see me again?" Rather, consider, "Life is busy, isn't it? I look forward to when we can see each other again?"
20. "I raised you better than that."
21. "That's not how you were raised."
22. "Your complexion (hair, nails, clothes) looks bad."
23. "Do you really like that _____?" (dress, shirt, house, apartment, car, or anything that they have purchased)
24. "You need to be more responsible."
25. "You don't love me." (Big no, no. This is the atom bomb that destroys relationships between a parent and adult child.)



These lists are taken from Sharon Jaynes book,
The Power of a Woman's Words: How the Words You Speak Shape the Lives of Others.