

# Social Networking Etiquette for Parents (and Youth Workers)

“Don’t you wish there was a repellent you could spray on your parents  
whenever they embarrass you in public?”  
-Teen on Facebook

One of the greatest fears for a teenager is that they will be embarrassed by a parent in public. There is nothing wrong with parents being on Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, or any other “all the rage” social app that comes out. I think we should be there. If you have a good relationship with your teen offline, then it is certainly possible to have a good one online. But the key to having a successful relationship with your teen on a social network such as Facebook is yours to win or lose based on your ability to avoid the social faux pas land mines.

Many a parent has stumbled onto one of these land mines completely unintentionally. It’s usually an “oops” moment that seems harmless enough to you, but makes your child’s eyes bug out while muttering under their breath, “What were you thinking?”  
Here are five key destructive actions to stay away from...

1. Beware of posting potentially embarrassing photos of them.  
-It’s always best to ask them before posting.
2. Beware of posting embarrassing photos of yourself.  
-After all the time you spent training your teen not to share inappropriate (or questionable) photos of herself online, don’t blow it by doing just the opposite yourself.
3. Keep comments to a minimum.  
-Occasional comments on your teen’s profile are fine, but keep them short and sweet.  
Don’t comment on everything they post.
4. No lecturing online.  
-Unless your goal is to isolate and ridicule your teen publically, don’t do it.  
-Choose instead to discuss issues or questionable material in person.
5. Keep the friend circle tight.  
-Your goal is not to be friends with every one of your teen’s friends. You don’t hang out in your daughter’s bedroom when her friends are over because that would be a little weird. It’s the same way online. Teenagers need space to interact with friends without you being part of every conversation. On the same note, please, please don’t send friend request to all your teenagers’ friends. It can look creepy and inappropriate.

You’re like a cultural anthropologist being given rare insight into a different culture. It is imperative to maintain this relationship while balancing between being a watchful and trusting parent.

-Excerpts from Brian Housman [Tech Savvy Parenting](#)