

# Moving from Responsible Authority to Benevolent Interest with Your Adolescent Son



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**W**hen your son was a toddler it was clearly your responsibility to ensure his survival and his socialization. You had complete authority and you would have been negligent if you didn't exercise it. By the time your son is 50 you should probably have let go the reins. You should have given up the feeling that you are responsible for your son's life in favor of the benevolent interest that you offer to your best friends in your healthiest adult relationships. You want the best for them and you want to help, but you are not judgmental about their performance and you don't feel that the consequences of their actions are your responsibility. You love them and they listen to you.

It is difficult to move from an attitude of authoritative responsibility to one of benevolent interest toward your adolescent, but this is the most important transition that you must negotiate in your relationship with him. During adolescence your relationship is in the twilight zone of responsibility and independence. You are still responsible, sort of, but your authority is slipping. He is still dependent, sort of, but he is trying to distance himself from that reality without jumping out of the safety net entirely.

Adolescents and their parents routinely disagree along the borderline of responsibility, authority, and autonomy. You will have noticed that he has his ways of insisting upon his independence. He will have noticed that you have your ways of insisting upon your responsibility and authority. If you want to retain your influence you must renegotiate. Call me.

## ***Relief, Recovery, Resolution***

*For adult men and women and for adolescent males*

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