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Question:

I was a bit "wild" in the area of sex when I was a teen. So now I feel like a hypocrite talking to my teen about sex. What should I do?

Answer:

I think this is one of the difficult questions sometimes, particularly for us parents when we look back at our own history and the things that we've done, but I want to encourage you around this question by helping you reframe it.

And that's really from the perspective of, there's a difference between hypocrisy and growth.

Hypocrisy is when you tell your kid not to do something that you're still doing. So if you're smoking marijuana, and you tell your kid, "don't smoke marijuana," you're a hypocrite.

Growth is where you tell your kid not to do something that you once did that you learned from and that you found was inappropriate.

So when you're having your discussion with your kids about sex, for example, this is one where, frankly, you might have growth in this area. What you want to make sure that you do with them is help them avoid the experiences that you had that were inappropriate. That's what we do all the time.

I'm always amazed when people have this sort of dichotomy around this. For example, if you were a drug user, a lot of times they try to bring those folks into high school. Why? They bring them into high



school to talk to kids about their experience. Why? Because they understand that if you have someone who has had a certain experience, and they are able to communicate that experience, and they are no longer doing that experience, it is growth, and that growth is helpful for young people.

So, I would encourage you, get in there, own the stuff that you think you need to. Obviously, be appropriate and be private about some things, but it's important that you not frame yourself or even think that you're a hypocrite because you're talking to your kid.

And, frankly, I encourage you just to be as engaged as you possibly can, because your kids need that from you.