



On the rocks

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Paradigms

You're the captain of a battleship, steaming into the foggy Atlantic. Dead ahead, a ship's light appears. You radio: "On collision course, advise you change course 20 degrees." The answer: "Advise you change course." Angry, you send: "I'm the captain of a battleship: change course!" The response? "I'm a lighthouse." This is what you call a paradigm shift. **Paradigms are the way we see things—our beliefs, our perspectives on life.** Faulty paradigms limit us, endanger us. Correct paradigms enable us. Do you have a clear view, or are you about to crash on the rocks?

Paradigms are important—they affect everything we do and say. Teenagers have a great potential for broad and lofty paradigms ("I *can* change the world!") or narrowing faulty paradigms ("No one understands me!"). Use these tips to help your teen develop clear paradigms for his or her life.

- **Foster a culture of openness.** Make sure your teen knows that he or she can ask you questions without fear of reprisal or rejection. Encourage him or her to ask (respectfully) about practices in your family, at school, or in society that he or she doesn't understand or doesn't agree with. If you don't have an answer, do some research together.
- **Broaden your teen's horizon.** Encourage your teen to look at life from different points of view. Try renting some movies which present issues from different cultural, political, or religious points of view. Watch and discuss them together. Remind your child that it's important to learn about and respect different points of view, but it doesn't mean you have to believe or agree with them.
- **Support your teen's interests.** As parents, we often inadvertently push our children to succeed in the things we succeeded in or the things we think are important. Remember that your teen is unique and will have his or her own interests that won't always correspond with yours.

"Cultivate your own capabilities, your own style. Appreciate the members of your family for who they are, even though their outlook or style may be miles different from yours." –Chuck Swindoll

