GABE SHIREY

PARENT PROMPT PLAYBOOK

Teen Edition

BETTER CONVERSATIONS WITH KIDS AGES 13 TO 18, STARTING TONIGHT

Gabe SHIREY

A NOTE FROM GABE

Why I made this

Teenagers will tell a windshield things they'll never tell a face.

Most of the conversations that matter with a teenager don't happen across a table. They happen in the car, in the kitchen after practice, or at 11 p.m. on a Tuesday when you happen to still be up. You can't schedule those moments. You can only be in the room when they show up.

If your teenager has gotten quieter, that doesn't mean the door closed. A lot of the time it means they're checking whether it's safe to bring something to you. This guide is about passing that check.

You don't need more time. You need the right window, a question that doesn't feel like an interview, and a plan for what you'll do when they finally tell you something real.

Pick one page. Run it tonight.

TO YOUR FAMILY'S LEGACY,

Gabe SHIREY

Find their window

You don't have to find new time. The day already hands you windows: short stretches when your teenager is most likely to talk. Pick 1 per child. A 15-year-old and a 9-year-old open at different hours.

The drive	A sealed room with no eye contact required. Turn the radio down, not off.
Home from practice	Maybe the most underrated 15 minutes in an athletic kid's week.
Late at night	Defenses are down and the day's real content surfaces. If you're still up, stay in the kitchen a little longer.
The kitchen	After school, standing at the open refrigerator. Stand at the island with them. Don't run anything.
Side by side	Rebounding, walking the dog, fixing something together. Shoulder to shoulder is easier than face to face.

TONIGHT

Write down 1 window per kid. Name the window, not the intention: "Drive to practice, [name]." For the next 14 days, track 1 thing: did the window happen with your phone put away? Yes or no. If you miss a day, don't make it up. Just run tomorrow.

When they open up

The first real thing a teenager brings you is a test. How you receive it decides whether there's a second one.

1 Keep your face still

No alarm, no sigh, no raised eyebrows. They're reading your reaction more closely than your words.

2 Say "Thanks for telling me."

Before advice, before consequences, before anything else.

3 Ask 1 more question

Not a solution. A question. "What happened next?" or "How are you feeling about it now?"

SKIP THE 11-SECOND RULING

You probably diagnosed it fast, and you're probably right. They didn't come for a verdict. If you can't tell what they want, ask: "Do you want my help, or do you want me to just listen?"

IF IT'S SERIOUS

You'll still deal with it. Deal with it after they feel heard, not instead of hearing them.

WHEN YOU GET "I DON'T KNOW"

It usually means "I don't know if it's safe to say yet." Treat it as a stall, not a refusal. Ask again tomorrow.

Say this, not that

Teenagers can hear a lecture coming from across the house. These swaps keep the door open.

INSTEAD OF		TRY
~~"Did you finish your homework?"~~	→	**"What's the most interesting thing you worked on this week?"** A status check gets a status answer.
~~"When I was your age…"~~	→	**"What's that like for you?"** Hear their version before you share yours.
~~Jumping to the fix~~	→	**"Do you want my help, or do you want me to listen?"** Fixing reads as not listening. Let them choose.
~~Handing down a consequence mid-argument~~	→	**"I'm too frustrated to be fair right now. Give me 10 minutes, and we'll figure it out together."** Owning your state takes the threat out of the pause.
~~"Get off your phone."~~	→	**Put yours in a drawer, then: "Want to come with me to the store?"** They watch what you do with yours more than what you say about theirs.
~~A quick "proud of you" and nothing else~~	→	**"You kept your cool when that call went against you. I'm proud of you."** Keep saying it. Add exactly what they did, so they know you were watching.

Know this month's answers

Teenagers change fast, and last year's answers don't count. Can you name these for each of your children?

- ☐ Their closest friend right now
- ☐ The show or creator they're watching this month
- ☐ The song they keep replaying
- ☐ The thing they're privately worried about this week

If you can't fill them all in, don't ask all 4 tonight. That's an interview. Get into their world instead:

Their screen	Ask what they're watching, then sit down and listen to the whole answer.
Their music	Play the song in the car. Ask what they like about it.
Your notes app	Write 1 new thing per child each week. In 12 weeks you'll know who they are this season.

For the drive

Ask 1 question per drive, not a string of them. Go first. Then wait.

1. Who's the most interesting person you talked to today?
2. What's everyone at school talking about that I've probably never heard of?
3. Who's someone you've gotten closer to this year?
4. What's a song you can't stop playing right now?
5. What's something adults get wrong about people your age?
6. If you could drop 1 class and add any class in the world, what would it be?
7. What's a trend at school right now that you think is ridiculous?
8. Who's the funniest person in your grade?
9. What's a skill you'd want to be really good at a year from now?
10. What's an opinion you have that most of your friends don't share?

For late at night

These go deeper. Save them for when the house is quiet and you're not in a hurry.

11 What's taking up the most space in your head right now?

12 Is there anything you'd want my help with if you knew I wouldn't overreact?

13 What's something you're looking forward to?

14 When you've had a bad day, what actually helps?

15 What do you want people to think of when they hear your name?

16 What's something you're proud of that nobody noticed?

17 What's 1 thing I do that you wish I'd do more?

18 What's 1 thing I do that you wish I'd stop?

19 If nobody else's opinion counted, what would you do after high school?

20 What's something we used to do together that you miss?

Some of these will get honest answers you didn't expect. That's the point. "Thanks for telling me," then 1 more question.

KEEP THIS ONE

Your tonight list

SCREENSHOT THIS PAGE AND KEEP IT ON YOUR PHONE.

Tonight

- ☐ Name 1 window per kid
- ☐ Phone put away for that window
- ☐ Ask 1 question, go first, then wait
- ☐ Write down 1 new thing you learned
- ☐ Track it: yes or no, for 14 days

Say this, not that

Homework check → "What's the most interesting thing you worked on this week?"

"When I was your age..." → "What's that like for you?"

The fix → "Do you want my help, or do you want me to listen?"

Mid-argument → "Give me 10 minutes, and we'll figure it out together."

When they tell you something

Keep your face still

Say "Thanks for telling me"

Ask 1 more question

Deal with serious things after they feel heard

Best windows

The drive: no eye contact required

Home from practice

Late at night, when the house is quiet

Side by side, doing something together

Want the system behind this? The Dad Dashboard, the 5-step routine I run with my children every night, is in The Driven Dad Code.

Every tool in this guide comes from my book.

THE BOOK

THE DRIVEN DAD CODE

THE UNTAUGHT PLAYBOOK FOR HIGH-PERFORMING FATHERS TO BUILD REAL CONNECTION AT HOME

JOIN THE WAITLIST AT GABESHIREY.COM

THE LEGACY BLUEPRINT

Want to go deeper? Work with me 1:1 through *The Legacy Blueprint*, my private coaching for fathers. Sign up at GabeShirey.com

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THE DRIVEN DAD ON SUBSTACK

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