

"Always, Never?"

Dear Antwort Mann,

**My parents are always on my case. They never let me do anything I want, and they always yell at me for no reason. I am sixteen years old and can make my own decisions. Why don't they trust me and just leave me alone?**

**Signed, "Really Ticked Off"**

Dear "Ticked,"

"Always" and "Never?" You don't give me specifics, but I can guess that what you are going through is common to most your age, including sweeping statements like "always" and "never." It may seem like that, but the truth is usually found somewhere in the middle. So, let me ask you a few questions for consideration:

Are you supposed to do chores around the house? Do you *always* do them? Do you *always* speak respectfully to your parents, and *never* yell at them? Do you *always* expect them to give you money, let you have the car, and buy you whatever you want, and *never* feel it is unfair of them to ask you to do something around the house in return? When you go somewhere with your friends, do you *always* let your parents know where you (really) are? You are *never* late, but if you were, would you *always* call and let them know? Are the friends you hang out with the kind that are *always* trustworthy and *never* get into trouble?

You weren't born with an owner's manual. Your parents likely are trying the best they can to raise you but, as sinners (like all of us), they make mistakes. They aren't always "fair," and sometimes yell when they shouldn't. They probably don't treat every one of your brothers and sisters the same way they treat you – at least, not all of the time. But, believe it or not, they really love you and are trying their best to raise you to be a decent and responsible adult. Their own failings and flaws as kids probably have them worrying about you making the same mistakes. They are trying to protect you from that, heavy-handed though it may seem at times.

So, Der Antwort Mann suggests that, if you want your parents to trust you and treat you more like an adult, then you need to consistently act trustworthy and behave like an adult. No temper tantrums when you don't get everything you want. No dodging or complaining when it comes to chores. You are part of the family, so it's time to act like it and help with the family responsibilities. Don't lie to your parents about where you are or whom you are with. If you are afraid of them knowing, then you probably shouldn't be doing it anyway.

It's tough being sixteen. You are caught between still being a kid who is dependent upon his parents, and a young adult who wants his independence. But this, too, shall pass. By trying your best to get along with your parents, showing them respect, and learning to forgive them as you would want them to forgive you, it will pass much more easily.

***"Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right." Ephesians 6:1***

Best Regards,

Der Antwort Mann