

# 9 habits of highly humiliating parents

by Holly Bowne

**W**e don't mean to do it. Really. Well, maybe somewhere deep down, we feel we owe it to them. Sort of a "do unto your kids as your parents did unto you" philosophy. After all, embarrassment can build character, right?

It's been interesting watching my 14-year-old daughter transition from sweet, bouncy little girl to sophisticated young lady with all its inherent eye-rolling, stylish hair-do experiments, and mortified hisses of "Moooooom! You're embarrassing me!"

Over the past couple of years, I've gotten an education on what parents can and cannot do when out in public with their teen—or in a car with their teen, or walking down the street with their teen, or basically being anywhere you might have the remote possibility of being seen by another human being with your teen.

So if you currently are, or some day will be, the parent of a tween or teen, here is my list of nine ways to successfully embarrass a teen without really trying.

**1. Kissy Face.** When driving your teen somewhere to meet with friends, be sure to kiss her goodbye just as she's about to get out of the car. It's critical that this is done in clear view of all her friends. She'll be

pleased that her friends now know how much you love and will miss her.

**2. LOL. Hey dawg!** Lemme tell ya', teens just love it when their parents try to use the latest slang and hip IM terms! They especially enjoy it if you practice using the slang around their friends. You go girl! You'll earn lots of props for this!

**3. Shop 'Til She Drops.** It's finally happened. Your teen wants to go shopping with her friends and without you. But you're not quite comfortable with this idea. So you offer to take her and her friends to the mall, while you trail subtly behind as they move from shop to shop. Suddenly, you notice a flower-patterned, lacy pink shirt with a ruffled collar that she would look adorable in. Now would be a great time to approach her stating "Honey, you would look so sweet in this! Do you want me to get it?"

**4. Dress for Success.** If you're lucky enough to wear the same shoe or shirt size as your teen, you can now enjoy the pleasure of shopping in the same sections of stores. While shopping for my daughter, I've occasionally found a shirt for her and picked up a matching one for myself. "You can't buy that!" she will gasp in astonishment. "I like it," I'll respond. And just to torment her a little further, I'll add, "Let's go over to the jeans section. I saw a really cool pair of ripped and shredded jeans that I want to go along with this top!"

**5. Get the Scoop.** Whenever friends call for my daughter on the phone, I often chat with them about the latest gossip

concerning who's going out with whom, who's dumped whom—while we wait for her to saunter down the stairs to take the call. Her friends seem to enjoy it, and my daughter's eyes get so huge as she approaches me and realizes what I'm doing.

**6. Be Conspicuous.** When picking your teen up from the latest afterschool activity or dance, it's always nice to hang out of your car window waving and shouting greetings to all the boys and girls you recognize from elementary school, even if your teen no longer hangs out with them. "Moooooom!" she'll hiss climbing into the passenger seat. "I don't even know him anymore!" "He's such a nice boy, you can't say a simple hello?" For some reason, this statement is greeted with deep sighs and enthusiastic eye-rolling.

**7. Vigilant Volunteer.** Rather than just serving as a ride to and from mixers and dances, it's even better if you can actually volunteer as a chaperone. You'll be a big hit with your teenager and all her friends if you are the one who gets to monitor the dance floor, breaking up any inappropriate dance moves that might be going on.

**8. Say Cheese.** Whenever you're at a school function, say a band or choir concert for example, your teen will be absolutely thrilled if you stand in the aisles, waving your arms wildly to get her attention. Then snap a few photos of her for good measure.

**9. Telling Stories.** Let's say your teen is having a bunch of friends over. A great thing to do is to share baby stories about her with all her friends. Anything concerning potty-training or thumb-sucking is always a big hit.

Well, there you have them. Just master these nine techniques and you'll soon join rank with the rest of us who are highly humiliating parents. □

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