

MAKING MEALS MEANINGFUL



Dr. Karyn Gordon's Tips on How to Use the Cards

1. Explain "Making Meals Meaningful" Cards

Explain to your kids that you heard about MMM and thought it would be a fun way to hear about their ideas and thoughts. The purpose of the cards is to encourage 2-way discussion and share stories so be careful NOT to make this into a 1-way lecture style, otherwise your kids may tune out!

2. Appoint a Leader / Facilitator

When you are preparing your meal or sitting at the dinner table, ask your kids / teens who wants to be the leader / facilitator. The person in this role has 3 responsibilities:

- a) Choose the questions (depending on time you could answer 1-2 questions per meal)
- b) Ask each person around the table their thoughts on the question –the goal is to get everyone involved!
- c) Ensure that no-one is interrupting or cutting others off

Remember: As the parent, the more vulnerable and transparent you are with your answers, the more your kids will follow your lead and do likewise, so get ready to share!

3. Accept Where Your Kids / Teens Are At

While some parents will find that their kids are eager to share their ideas / stories (often parents of younger children), other parents may find their kids disengaged in MMM or think it's silly or awkward. My encouragement is to simply accept where they are at and don't force them to share. Simply allow them to be the listener as the rest of the family shares their ideas and hopefully they will join in the conversation when they are ready.

4. Try to Be Relaxed

After doing research with 1,500 students, I have learned that the #1 value for kids / teens that encourages them to talk to their parents, is when their parents are "relaxed." The mood (and setting) highly impacts conversation. So when you are sitting down for your meal, take a big deep breath, try to relax, be present and enjoy the moment!

5. Encourage Your Kids to Brainstorm Questions

To keep the momentum, encourage your kids to come up with their own list of questions around these topics. We want to encourage the spirit of learning from each other!