

As the new year brings the big question, “What is YOUR New Year’s Resolution,” we challenge you to consider what your teenager’s resolution might be. Is it to be on time to class? Do better at school? Be a better athlete? Surely, there are many discussions around this topic. As a parent, you may want to jump in and help your student reach his or her personal goals, yet you value your student’s doing his or her own “experiential learning” as well. The philosophy behind academic coaching is, “The best way to predict your success in your future is to CREATE it.” We work individually with students developing an attitude that makes success possible through their OWN hard work. We look at our time together as stepping stones to independence and readiness for the day when our students leave for college.

Here is something you can do to help them take charge of their lives:

Increase the amount of responsibility at home.

College students have to get up for, and get to classes, on their own, do their laundry, make their own appointments, and handle a number of day-to-day items. Pick one or two things initially that you do for your students, and let them know that they are now responsible for doing these things. Then, follow through and let them do it! If you feel they did not complete the task to your satisfaction, set a time to talk about it, and let the students self-discover ways to improve. This skill of self-management will develop over time so that by the time they leave for college, the students will have the capacity to take charge of their lives with confidence.

## 2. Listen to them

When they are emotional, help them use these four steps we found on the internet educational resource site. Identify the source of their feelings and identify what coping skill they will use to help them move through the emotional state. De-escalating negative behavioral reactions will allow them to refocus on their goals.

Emotional regulation is a complex process that involves initiating, inhibiting, and modulating one’s mental state and behavior in response to an external or internal stimulus.

1. **Name the feeling.** What emotion are you experiencing? For instance, are you sad, stressed, angry, anxious, joyful, disappointed, excited, or embarrassed?
2. **Accept what you’re feeling.** Avoidance only fuels your emotions. Remind yourself that it’s OK to feel your feelings. Schab suggests saying to yourself, “It’s OK to feel \_\_\_\_\_.”
3. **Express your feeling.** “Expressing a feeling is the only one way to release it,” she writes. For instance, you can express your feelings by writing about them, talking to someone you trust, crying, relaxing or exercising. Just be sure that whatever activity you choose, it doesn’t hurt you or anyone else.
4. **Pick a healthy way to take care of yourself.** “What do you need right now to take care of yourself?” For instance, you might need a hug, a nap, a walk, a shower, or support.