

Engaging parents of children approaching adolescence

Grace's story

Grace is 13 years-old. She and her mother, Kelly, used to be close and they talked a lot. Lately though, they have not been getting along.

Kelly is always on Facebook and Grace assumes she is looking for a boyfriend because she is sick of hanging out with her. Grace hates Facebook; the girls in her class are so mean and Grace knows they think she's a loser. Grace is not having such a great time at school. Her grades are a disaster and she hardly has any friends, and the one friend she does have; Ashleigh, stays home from school a lot to smoke dope.

Ashleigh keeps inviting Grace to come with her and she thinks maybe she will try it once – just so Ashleigh doesn't give up on her. A couple of weeks ago she had a couple of beers with Ashleigh after school and ended up getting sick. She copped it from the girls in her class for a week after that. It has got to the point where Grace doesn't want to talk to anyone; there's no real point when all you get in return is put downs.

Grace makes a bonfire on Saturday nights hoping that her mum might come and join her. She thinks that maybe they will talk like they used to and she can tell her what's really going on at school.

But every Saturday night they end up fighting. Grace knows she can be really mean to her mum, but sometimes she gets so angry that she can't help it.

Grace thinks it's her fault that her mum would prefer to go out, but she could never admit it. Grace has noticed that her mum has been different lately. She stares off into space a lot and doesn't really listen. Sometimes Grace has to repeat herself five times. She worries about her little brother, Lachlan. She tries to look after him when her mum is sad but he gets in her way and is really annoying. How is she meant to make friends with a seven-year-old hanging out with her every second of the day? Grace wishes their dad would come and visit once in a while.

[Follow this link](#) to watch a short three minute video of Grace's story.

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