



UP IN YOUR

business

What do you do when the 'rents stalk you online, or even worse, read your texts?

Coming home from school to find that your mum or dad has snooped around your room or checked

up on your social media accounts can feel totally invasive, almost like an act of betrayal. And trying to talk to them can seem pointless, right? Maybe you feel like it's none of their business what you post online or do with your friends, but they want to know every. Single. Thing. To find out the secret to getting your parents to respect your privacy (online and IRL), we asked Jill Zimmerman Rutledge, author of *Dealing With the Stuff That Makes Life Tough*, for her advice.

Mum and Dad have started reading my msgs.

... wut? Srs?

Parents freak out because there are scary things that can happen to girls online...

Social media



Getting a Facebook friend request from your dad? Um, no. Is nothing sacred anymore? What's next, parents screenshotting your Snapchats? Jill says a huge reason why parents stalk their kids online is because they're worried they're putting themselves in danger. "Parents freak out because there are scary things that can happen to girls online," Jill explains. "They just want their kids to make good choices." Showing your parents you're just talking to your friends and people they know can make them less worried, which Jill says is the key to everything. "When your parents are anxious, they become more intrusive," she says. To prove to Mum and Dad that you aren't doing anything shady or unsafe on social media, the best thing you can do is show them, literally. "Better communication is key," Jill says. Once they see you're talking to people they know, the more likely they are to back off a bit.

Reading your texts

Finding out your parents have eavesdropped on your private conversations by scrolling through your texts is infuriating. It's normal to want to snatch your phone back and start yelling at them, but Jill says that's the worst thing you can do. "In the heat of an argument you should take a break, go to your room and chill out. Then talk with your parents about it," she says. If you've never really done anything to break your parents' trust, make sure you remind them of that. "That's an important conversation to have and it can really help remind them that you're a good, trustworthy person."

On the other hand, if you have been in trouble with your parents before, like by sneaking out of the house, drinking, or anything else to break their house rules, you have to figure out a way to earn back their trust. "They may want to read your texts for a month, but you can use that time to gradually have them feel more comfortable," Jill says. Sure it will suck, but once your parents see your behaviour has changed, you can start another conversation and hopefully they'll give you more freedom.

Policing your friends

Most of the time your parents will trust you – they just might not trust all of your friends. If your parents don't like some of the people in your social group, ask them why. "Some people are awkward around their friends' parents, in those situations a discussion can be important," Jill says. "You can tell your parents your friend isn't 'bad', they just feel uncomfortable around adults." But if your mum or dad won't let you hang out with someone because they think they are a 'bad influence', Jill says you should try to strike a deal and be more transparent about what you're doing with your friends. "Tell your mum where you're going, what you'll be doing and text her if you go somewhere else," she says. Clueing them in will give them that reassurance that everything's cool, so they can relax.

FICTIONAL PEEPS WHO TOTALLY FEEL YOUR STRICT PARENT STRUGGLES:

EMILY FIELDS FROM PLL

Em's mum was so not OK when she found out her daughter was crushing on a girl, Maya.



NEMO FROM FINDING DORY

Your overprotective dad dramas are nothing on Nemo's. His dad was so worried he didn't even want him to go to school!



Confirm

Delete Request

