

What is this card deck for?

Sometimes, for families with teens, conversations around life after high school can feel stressful and contentious. Post-graduation depression and anxiety are real phenomena for young people who are straddling the transition from youth to adulthood. Parents and caregivers, often drawing on their own past experiences in addition to their expectations, hopes, and dreams for their children, sometimes reluctantly nag or argue. Differences in priorities, vision, or sense of readiness can manifest in ways that cause tension in the relationships between parents and children.

Jewish tradition teaches that “a debate for the sake of Heaven will endure and one that is not for the sake of Heaven will not endure” (Pirkei Avot 5:17). With this teaching, our sages simultaneously established a precedent of emphasizing relationships above rightness, *and* a sentiment that some disagreements are positive and should be welcomed. No one expects parents and teenagers to see eye-to-eye on all things. Especially as young people prepare for the demands of independence, they necessarily develop their *own* sense of self and a vision *for* themselves that may be at odds with the one their caregiver has long held.

We developed this deck of cards in partnership with student and adult leaders at Challenge Success (www.challengesuccess.org), to help families make slight but intentional shifts in how they discuss life after high school. This deck is an opportunity for honesty and recalibration between parents and teens...literally, a chance for each to “show their hand,” and “lay all the cards on the table.” We hope also that the questions offered on these cards will demonstrate healthy and productive ways of discussing the college admissions process and other post-secondary choices. This is a time of mixed emotions in the family life cycle. It is normal to experience both excitement *and* uncertainty, both joy *and* sadness. These combinations are expressed at nearly all Jewish life cycle events.

We hope that the use of these cards might offer a path for families to connect, honor and hold space for the different opinions and emotions of one another, and to joyfully mark this important milestone together.

To learn more about the Jewish Teen Education and Engagement Funder Collaborative, please visit www.teenfundercollaborative.com.

Instructions and Modifications:

1. Divide the deck and hand the Teen Cards to the parent and Parent Cards to the teen (counterintuitive...we know!). **The ORANGE CARDS are questions for PARENTS to ask their teens. The TEAL CARDS are questions for TEENS to ask their parents.**
2. Shuffle your deck
3. Jump right in or decide first on your “House Rules” - See some suggestions below:
 - a. Have each player draw five cards. After each has been asked and answered for a total of ten, make a decision together whether to draw another five and keep going or “know when to fold.”
 - b. Allot a designated number of “skips” or “swaps” to each player. They can use them to either move on to the next question or swap it out for a different card.
 - c. Get creative with other game equipment - roll some dice to determine how many questions each player must answer, or flip over an hourglass timer to encourage players to share more (or less!) detail.
4. Have fun and *don't judge*. You win the game if you feel more connected to each other at the end. Bonus points if you learn something new!

Tips for Parents:

- ◆ The **ORANGE CARDS** are questions for PARENTS to ask their teens.
- ◆ Don't overplay your hand! Pace yourself through these cards, maybe flipping over a couple every few days. It wasn't designed to be used in one sitting.
- ◆ The conversations about college seem to be happening younger and younger. Preparation is a good thing and asking these questions early can reduce stress later on. But, if your teen isn't ready to imagine themselves on campus, stick to the questions that more generally address what the future *could* hold, and keep it light. It's okay to stay on the surface and save the deep end for junior or senior year.
- ◆ Be honest about your own experiences but careful not to overshare. Teens really don't need to know *everything* about your experiences!
- ◆ We aimed to design this deck with inclusion and equity in mind. Maybe you didn't go to college but instead went straight to work, joined the military, took a gap year, or followed a different path. Your story is important role modeling for your teen so while we did our best to be inclusive in the wording of each question, please feel free to modify if it doesn't accurately describe your narrative.
- ◆ Not knowing is okay! If the cards inspire conversation or additional questions for which you may not have the answers, commit to doing the research together (and check out our website www.roadtriptocollege.org for helpful resources).
- ◆ Be aware of your body language and tone of voice. Like most people, teens will pick up on these elements of conversation first. They'll know if you're faking non-judgement or disguising unwelcome advice, and it may be the quickest way to shut down the conversation.

Tips for Teens:

- ◆ The **TEAL CARDS** are questions for TEENS to ask their parents.
- ◆ Indulge your parents in this game. We promise it will be interesting. Let them ask a few questions and do the same in return.
- ◆ But maybe suggest in advance that you both have veto power, or a certain number of "skips," in case there's a question you (or they) are uncomfortable answering.
- ◆ You may also want to establish together certain "rules of the game." Like, every five cards you can take a break, or discuss whether to stop or resume. Or maybe there are certain places or times that you don't want to play (like in the car on the way to school).
- ◆ See this as an opportunity for self-advocacy. Being open and non-judgmental are in the rules of the game, so take advantage of this free pass to say what you really think, what you really want, what you really need.
- ◆ Be *curious*...your parent may share some wisdom that is actually super helpful. Ask followup questions. Challenge yourself to keep the conversation going for as long as possible instead of answering in as few words as possible.



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