

**TIP SHEET #4:**

## **Are Your Emotions Contagious?**

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from

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*Helping Students Succeed in the Critical Years*

- 1. Be aware of the temperament and tone of your home.** “Emotional contagion” affects all human relationships, from marriage to business to professional sports. Try to under-react to your teen and not match his or her high emotional state. Try to be business-like.
- 2. Sometimes, creating distance can be most effective.** Step back and think about the reasons for your teen’s distress and the best ways to cope with it. If you know the cause, you’ll have a better idea of what you can do to help, whether it’s leaving her alone for a few hours or making yourself available so she can vent.
- 3. We don’t realize we’re being influenced by others’ emotions.** Interestingly, negative emotions are usually more catching than positive ones. One of the functions of sadness is to ask for help from others. Try to be tender and more attentive to your teen, even though he might be trying your patience at the end of a long day.
- 4. Be your family’s CEO (Chief Energy Officer).** Don’t allow yourself to be overly influenced by a destructive kind of energy and then unconsciously communicate that energy to others in your home. Parents are the leaders in the home and impact the family by their moods. Negative emotions spread fast and they’re highly toxic.
- 5. We can’t check our emotions at the door when we walk in the house.** It pays to be aware of what you’re feeling at any given moment. You can’t change what you don’t notice. You can’t fake “positive” for long, so genuine matters.
- 6. Embrace realistic optimism.** Have the faith to tell the most hopeful and empowering story possible, but also be willing to confront difficult facts as they arise with your teen and deal with them directly.