

Topic #1: Cell Phones & Teenagers
-A Social Necessity or A Dangerous Combination?-

My name is Sue. I'm 15 years old, and I'm a junior high school student. Last night, I asked my parents if I could have my own cell phone, but they said "NO". They think I'm too young to have my own phone, and they're actually worried that if I do get one, I might somehow get myself into trouble. That's so stupid! I'm not a baby – I can take care of myself. I think the only reason they don't want me to have my own cell phone is because they won't be able to eavesdrop on my conversations anymore. My father says "I didn't have my own cell phone when I was a teenager and you don't need one either!". That's ridiculous. Times have changed since then and now everyone my age has a cell phone – except me.

I'm Peter, and I'm Sue's father. I know all her friends have their own cell phones - and I think it's ridiculous. I mean, why does a teenager need a cell phone? She sees all her friends at school everyday, and if they want to reach her at night or on weekends, they can call her at home. Besides, having her own cell phone might put her at risk. If she starts receiving calls on her own cell phone, my wife and I won't be able to monitor who she is talking to. It's a dangerous world out there and my daughter is naïve – what if she starts talking to the wrong kind of people? My wife and I won't be able to protect her if we don't know who she is talking to. She thinks she can take care of herself, but I'm not going to take any chances. When she turns 18, she can have as many cell phones as she wants, but in the meantime, the answer is "NO".

Discussion Questions – Beginner Level:

1. Do you agree with Sue or with her father? Why?
2. Do you think it's really necessary for teenagers to have cell phones?
3. What are the advantages and disadvantages of a teenager having a cell phone?
4. If you had a teenager who wanted a cell phone, would you say "YES" or "NO"? Why?

Discussion Questions – Intermediate to Advanced Levels:

5. What are the social consequences of Sue being the only one of her friends not to have a cell phone?
6. Peter is worried that his daughter might be in danger if she has her own cell phone. Do you agree with him, or do you think he is over-reacting?