

## IT'S TOUGH BEING THE MOM OF A TEENAGER

I'm at my wit's end. Well, maybe not quite but pretty darn close. I've been living with a foreign body for 10 weeks and I've reached my limit.

Let me explain.

My youngest daughter returned in June from her freshman year at college to spend the summer with me. One year ago, exit sweet child. Ten weeks ago, enter Miss know-everything, don't-ask-me -to-do-anything.

I know this is normal developmental stuff. It's the breaking away that is so characteristic of healthy teenage development. It's just that, understanding it notwithstanding, I can take just so much.

She wants what she wants when she wants it and it's usually at the very last minute. She'll do what she wants which is usually not at all what she wants but is more accurately a response based on what I want and aimed at being 180 degrees the opposite. And to top it off, as she says, "Don't you know I know everything, Mom!" This is a statement of fact, not a question.

I'd managed to hold it together pretty well until recently. But with the crush of back to school arrangements, my self-control has been spotty at best.

I get that she's just being a normal teenager and I am allowing myself to get hooked. Yes, allowing myself, even though it feels more like it's happening to me and she's causing it.

So I paid attention to what's hooking me. And I became aware that I get hooked when I'm asked to give in ways in which I don't want to give and when I do anyway, I still can never please her. And up comes this little voice inside of me, grown softer over the years but still there, that says, "If you were really a good mom, you'd get it right for her." And that brings up feelings which are about me and which are not about her behavior.

So when she leaves to go back to college soon, I'm gonna have a smile on my face. No more tears and heavy heart like one year ago at the big freshman send-off.

So how long will this state of affairs last? I thinking it'll be until she figures out, probably in her senior year, that she is indeed ok. And then I will be okay in her eyes once again, too.