

January 2, 2013



To My 13-Year-Old, An iPhone Contract From Your Mom, With Love

Posted: 12/28/2012 5:15 pm

Dear Gregory

Merry Christmas! You are now the proud owner of an iPhone. Hot Damn! You are a good and responsible 13-year-old boy and you deserve this gift. But with the acceptance of this present comes rules and regulations. Please read through the following contract. I hope that you understand it is my job to raise you into a well rounded, healthy young man that can function in the world and coexist with technology, not be ruled by it. Failure to comply with the following list will result in termination of your iPhone ownership.

I love you madly and look forward to sharing several million text messages with you in the days to come.

1. It is my phone. I bought it. I pay for it. I am loaning it to you. Aren't I the greatest?
2. I will always know the password.
3. If it rings, answer it. It is a phone. Say hello, use your manners. Do not ever ignore a phone call if the screen reads "Mom" or "Dad." Not ever.
4. Hand the phone to one of your parents promptly at 7:30 p.m. every school night and every weekend night at 9:00 p.m. It will be shut off for the night and turned on again at 7:30 a.m. If you would not make a call to someone's land line, wherein their parents may answer first, then do not call or text. Listen to those instincts and respect other families like we would like to be respected.
5. It does not go to school with you. Have a conversation with the people you text in person. It's a life skill. *Half days, field trips and after school activities will require special consideration.
6. If it falls into the toilet, smashes on the ground, or vanishes into thin air, you are responsible for the replacement costs or repairs. Mow a lawn, babysit, stash some birthday money. It will happen, you should be prepared.
7. Do not use this technology to lie, fool, or deceive another human being. Do not involve yourself in conversations that are hurtful to others. Be a good friend first or stay the hell out of the crossfire.
8. Do not text, email, or say anything through this device you would not say in person.
9. Do not text, email, or say anything to someone that you would not say out loud with their parents in the room. Censor yourself.
10. No porn. Search the web for information you would openly share with me. If you have a question about anything, ask a person -- preferably me or your father.
11. Turn it off, silence it, put it away in public. Especially in a restaurant, at the movies, or while speaking with another human being. You are not a rude person; do not allow the iPhone to change that.
12. Do not send or receive pictures of your private parts or anyone else's private parts. Don't laugh. Someday you will be tempted to do this despite your high intelligence. It is risky and could ruin your teenage/college/adult life. It is always a bad idea. Cyberspace is vast and more powerful than you. And it is hard to make anything of this magnitude disappear -- including a bad reputation.

13. Don't take a zillion pictures and videos. There is no need to document everything. Live your experiences. They will be stored in your memory for eternity.
14. Leave your phone home sometimes and feel safe and secure in that decision. It is not alive or an extension of you. Learn to live without it. Be bigger and more powerful than FOMO (fear of missing out).
15. Download music that is new or classic or different than the millions of your peers that listen to the same exact stuff. Your generation has access to music like never before in history. Take advantage of that gift. Expand your horizons.
16. Play a game with words or puzzles or brain teasers every now and then.
17. Keep your eyes up. See the world happening around you. Stare out a window. Listen to the birds. Take a walk. Talk to a stranger. Wonder without googling.
18. You will mess up. I will take away your phone. We will sit down and talk about it. We will start over again. You and I, we are always learning. I am on your team. We are in this together.

It is my hope that you can agree to these terms. Most of the lessons listed here do not just apply to the iPhone, but to life. You are growing up in a fast and ever changing world. It is exciting and enticing. Keep it simple every chance you get. Trust your powerful mind and giant heart above any machine. I love you. I hope you enjoy your awesome new iPhone.

xoxoxo,
Mom

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