

Processing with Parents Guide

Christmas break is a great time to be talking with your parents about your post-graduation options. Regardless of whether you are considering iEDGE or EDGE, whether your parents are believers or not, involving them in your process is crucial. Here are a few tips and talking points to help you think about this crucial conversation with your parents.

TIPS

- **Be prepared** – think of this conversation the way you would a job interview or class presentation. You don't need to prepare a powerpoint but *do* prepare a few talking points. Think through what you want to say and how you want to say it. Anticipate questions your parents might have (about finances, insurance, safety and care). It's ok to say "I don't know". Your parents won't expect you to have all the answers, but they *do* want to know that you are thinking through this decision and seeking out answers. Saying "*Oh, I'll figure that out later*" does not instill confidence in your parents that you have really thought about this option.
- **Be an adult** – not a kid. Your parents will always be your parents, but in this transitional period of your life (graduating from college), you want to move into an adult-to-adult relationship with your parents rather than a parent-child relationship. Part of that adult-adult relationship means realizing that your parents will have their own set of fears and insecurities (that isn't really about you at all).
- **Be honest and steadfast** – your parents have watched you want to do everything from be an astronaut to wanting every new toy on the market. It might be easy for them to think "*this is just another phase*" before Johnny/Jane settles down and gets a "real job". Share your heart honestly and openly in a way *they* can understand, and don't be offended if they aren't initially (or ever) as excited as you are about this new opportunity. Ask the Lord to help you communicate in a way that your parents can understand and to help you patiently listen to them without becoming defensive or offended.
- **Pray for your parents** – be proactive in thinking for and praying for your parents just as you would any other friend, not just praying that they would let *you* do what *you* want but that God would really be working in *their* hearts.
- **Practice** – if you are really nervous about talking with your parents or if your relationship with them tends to be argumentative or defensive, then ask a staff person or mentor to "practice" with you. In the same way we practice learning to share the gospel effectively, we can practice communicating effectively to our parents. Remember that effective communication isn't just about giving information but a 2-way conversation.

TALKING POINTS

1. **Heart and vision** – Why do you want to do this?
2. **Benefits** – How does doing this benefit me? My career? My long-term goals?
3. **Costs/Concerns** – What will it cost me to do this? What are the concerns/questions I have? Acknowledging that any decision you make will cost you something and expressing your concerns or bringing up ones you think your parents might have, show them that you aren't just blindly and excitedly chasing this option. Thoughtfully consider it from all sides.
4. **Their questions** – Invite your parents to ask questions and share their concerns. Patiently listen without interrupting them or becoming defensive (remember you are relating adult-to-adult). Practice active listening, and be actively praying that God would give you wisdom to know how to answer their questions and concerns. Remember it's ok to say "I don't know, but I'll find out."