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YOUR TEEN™

yourteenmag.com

for parents

Q&A
with
Tracy
Pollan and
her family



ARE WE HAVING FUN YET?

5 Steps
to a Great
Family Vacation



BFFs FOREVER!
Understanding
Tween
Friendships

*First (Ever)
Paycheck*
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How to Call a
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MEETING**

VOL. 7 ISSUE 6
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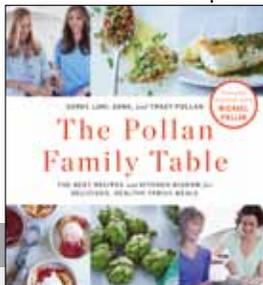
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**In total, 18 HB seniors received
24 OFFERS
to attend Ivy League schools: Brown,
Columbia, Cornell, Dartmouth,
University of Pennsylvania,
Princeton, and Yale.**

EDITOR'S LETTER

I love family vacations in all forms—whether it's renting houses, sleeping in cabins at state parks with other families, pitching a tent, borrowing a friend's apartment on the beach, taking the occasional hotel vacations, or staying at Disney timeshares.

Each style of stay has its own pros and cons. Rented houses can succeed or fail on the quality of the house; travel with friends can ride on the dynamic between the kids; borrowed apartments have everyone a little on edge (actually, just mom); and Disney—well, everyone is always happy at Disney, right?

Well, as it turns out, it's pretty impossible to make every family member happy all the time. We all have our ups and downs, no matter where we're headed.

I'm tightly wound during the planning stages of a trip. When everyone else is filled with excitement and anticipation, I am just anxious. My husband hits his low when we are in a rush. He needs to be punctual. One kid has my anxiety but it's largely focused on a family favorite—riding bikes. One kid hates to be left out. One needs the schedule to remain as promised. One is politely stubborn. One stresses at the end of the trip.

But even if we hit minor stumbling blocks along the way, we still love a family vacation. And, over the years, I have learned some lessons. Here are my top five:

- 1. Leave me alone before the trip.** Everyone can be counted on to have a meltdown. Expect and overlook those moments. The smaller the reaction, the better the recovery.
- 2. Do a great activity within the first hour.** Everyone awaits vacations with very high expectations. And when the first activity is a success, everyone calms down.
- 3. Carry snacks to save the hungry person from falling apart.**
- 4. Plan the details of the trip in advance.** As Julie the cruise director, I have learned that spontaneity with five kids is a recipe for disaster. If someone objects to the plan in advance, you can negotiate other activities for the disenfranchised. When it happens in the moment, the winners win and the loser feels like we chose the other kids.
- 5. Create some formal work cycle.** When the vacation includes food preparation, I create a work wheel with assignments for the whole family. This eliminates someone getting stuck (me) in the kitchen while others resume the fun.

“Even if we hit minor stumbling blocks along the way, we still love a family vacation. And, over the years, I have learned some lessons.”

There are more things to consider when planning a vacation with teens, and travel writer Kate Pockocks's feature in this issue got me thinking about steps I could take to ensure smoother sailing on our next vacation. I hope you get some good ideas, too.

This issue is full of great information, but one article is extra-special to me. I have been following Kelly Corrigan since her first book, *The Middle Place*, and had placed her on my short list of hopeful interviews. We sent her a copy of the magazine, wrote her requests, and on one sunny day, she replied yes. She captures life's moments like no one else. After you enjoy the interview with her, check her out on at Medium.com

As the school year ends and summer begins, enjoy the sunshine (with SPF), enjoy the family table, enjoy your friendships, and ...

Enjoy the read.



Forever green and white. No matter what colors come next.

Congratulations to the Laurel School Class of 2015.



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LISA DAMOUR

Parents devote lots of energy to helping babies sleep through the night. But what about tweens and teens? This issue, Dr. Lisa Damour shows us how to make sure our older children get a decent night's rest too (page 53). Watch for Dr. Damour's new book, *Untangled: Guiding Teenage Girls Through the Seven Transitions into Adulthood*, early next year.



JESSICA LAHEY

Middle school brings many changes, including in our adolescent's friendships. Jessica Lahey, author of *The Gift of Failure: How the Best Parents Learn to Let Go So Their Children Can Succeed*, offers her take on tween friendships in "BFFs Forever! Maybe Not..." on page 49.



FRANCES E. JENSEN

Have you ever wondered what's going on inside your adolescent's head? Then you'll want to flip to page 43 to read our fascinating interview with Dr. Frances E. Jensen, a leading neuroscientist and author of *The Teenage Brain: A Neuroscientist's Survival Guide to Raising Adolescents and Young Adults*.



Anne M. Fletcher

Many teenagers experiment with drugs and alcohol, but what to do when that crosses the line to a substance use disorder? Anne M. Fletcher, M.S., R.D. and author of *Inside Rehab: The Surprising Truth About Addiction Treatment—And How to Get Help That Works* helps us get started on page 38.



Kelly Corrigan

With three books and a regular gig on *Medium.com*, Kelly Corrigan has kept us laughing—and crying—for years now. We talk with the author of the bestselling *Glitter & Glue* about how life has changed with teenagers in the house. Read our interview on page 22.

ONLINE AT YOURTEENMAG.COM

WHAT'S TRENDING

➔ We've put some great extras online this issue, including a simple, delicious pasta recipe from *The Pollan Family Table* (bit.ly/YTpollan-recipe) and more of our interview with Dr. Frances Jensen, author of *The Teenage Brain* (bit.ly/YT-teenagebrain). Look for links throughout the magazine.

➔ Hot off the presses! *Your Teen's* free 2015 Summer Survival Guide. Get yours at bit.ly/YTsmrGd2

➔ Got questions? We'll get you an answer. Our Ask the Expert service is free and anonymous. Visit us at bit.ly/YTAskUs to get started.

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Nicole Rohr [@HearNicoleRohr](https://twitter.com/HearNicoleRohr) [@YourTeenMag](https://twitter.com/YourTeenMag) My girls are only 5 and 2 but little do they know I am building my teenager survival kit now!



HEARTS for Families [@HEARTS4Families](https://twitter.com/HEARTS4Families) [@YourTeenMag](https://twitter.com/YourTeenMag) Last time we went "just to look" at your boards we got sucked in for a long time. Great content! pinterest.com/yourteenmag/

A photograph of Nate Cotterman, a man with glasses and a black t-shirt with 'VERE' and 'CIA' printed on it. He is standing in a glass studio, with a glowing furnace in the background. The text 'From art school to the fire.' is overlaid on the right side of the image.

From art school to the fire.

Nate Cotterman
CIA Class of 2007
Glass major
Glass Assistant
Joe Cariati Glass

Creativity matters to Nate Cotterman. Working in a professional glass studio in Los Angeles, Nate is learning the ropes of running a glass business, while also having access to a studio to produce his own work. Nate believes his drawing skills honed at CIA help him to visualize his ideas into three-dimensional forms.

See Nate at work at cia.edu/nate

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WE ASKED, TEENS TOLD: *Your worst lie or cheat?*

"On vacation, my sister and our friends took a boat out to the middle of a lake without telling any of our parents. We called them after 15 minutes and told them what we'd done. They were angry. My mom doesn't trust me anymore." *Boston, MA*

"I didn't study at all for the SAT. I ran out of time on the math section. When the writing section began, I flipped back to the math section for a few more minutes. A boy next to me saw me. My heart started to beat quickly and I wanted to cry. I lived in fear that he would talk to the SAT proctors. He didn't. I'm taking the test again soon. I won't make the same mistake again!"

San Mateo, CA

"There was a boy I'd been talking to for awhile. I knew my parents would never let me go out with him. So, I lied and said I was going out with my friend. Then I picked him up and we went out to dinner. Two weeks later, my mom confronted me about it. I didn't know what to say, so I lied. But it still confuses me to this day—how did she know?"

Cleveland, OH

→ For more "worst lies" stories, go to YourTeenMag.com/lies

YOUR TURN

Dear *Your Teen*,

I thought it important to take a few minutes to pass on praise for your website. I found the articles on homeless teens very moving. There was so much practical advice I am sure many parents and teens themselves will find useful.

Stay well. Stay happy.

John and Andrea

#parenthack

Want More Balance?

Take a moment to reflect on your teenager's school year. Was it way too stressful? If so, try adding more of this into your teenager's schedule next fall, says Dr. Catherine Steiner-Adair:

1. Sleep (9 hours at a minimum)
2. Healthy food
3. Exercise
4. Daily downtime (even if that means doing less)
5. Fewer screens

"A big part of a life in balance should involve not spending too much time on screens," says Steiner-Adair, the author of *The Big Disconnect: Protecting Childhood and Family Relationships in the Digital Age*. "That's a problem for teenagers and adults right now."

Tales from the Front Lines



Did I ever think that I would spend a Saturday morning picking microscopic pills from my daughter's Lululemon yoga pants? I went from feeling proud of being a fully engaged dad doing laundry to being soundly reprimanded for ruining a \$100 pair of yoga pants by putting them in the drier. When my daughter confronted me—and after I said I was sorry—I calmly asked her what she was trying to get out of the conversation when she approached it in such an accusatory way. She ran upstairs and then off to work. I can imagine her recounting the story to her co-workers. Did they gasp and comfort her by telling her that all dads are losers like hers? Yet here I am, picking these little pills out. Maybe I'm not a loser, but a big pushover?—*Anonymous Dad*

Do you really want to know?



It takes an average of **50 licks** to polish off a single-scoop ice cream cone.

icecream.com



Watermelon is both a fruit and a vegetable. It is part of the cucumber, squash, and pumpkin family. Americans each eat **15 pounds** of it annually.

watermelon.org



40% of 12 to 17 year olds said they tried marijuana for the first time during the summer.

National Household Survey on Drug Abuse



30% of Americans age 16 to 19 were employed last summer, down from a high of 45% in 2000.

Bureau of Labor Statistics

Product Picks

Kid-tested and parent-approved,
Your Teen recommends:

INNOWAVE HEADPHONES

Take your music everywhere you go this summer, and look stylin', too! InnoWave is an over-the-head headset that provides a great sound experience. With a distinctive squiggly top, they're available in vibrant colors with a flat cable that doesn't get tangled. "These headphones have a fantastic, clear and powerful sound," raves *Your Teen's* Matt Mahoney. "The sound quality is definitely comparable to some of the more popular earphones of today's ages like Beats by Dre and Bose. The look is very stylish and distinctive." Innodevice.com



SMART FLOUR GLUTEN-FREE PIZZAS AND PIZZA CRUSTS

Good pizza is all about the crust. Even if you can't have gluten, you still want good pizza. Smart Flour gluten-free pizzas and pizza crusts are made with a perfect trio of ancient grains (sorghum, amaranth, and teff) that mix for an unbeatable combination of taste, texture and nutrition. "These crusts were good if you are gluten-free and the pizza toppings were tasty," says Julie Frayman. "I really enjoyed them." www.smartflourfoods.com



OXY ACNE TREATMENT PRODUCTS

Enjoy clear, beautiful summer skin with OXY Daily Defense Skin Clearing treatments. Gentle enough to use every day, and powerful enough to help keep your skin acne-free. "Both the Oxy face wash and the Oxy cleansing pads are miracle workers," says *Your Teen* intern Brooke Siegler. "I had a few pimples, and these products cleared my skin up within three days. They left my face smelling great, and feeling fresh, clean, and beautiful!" Oxyskincare.com

MY GREEN FILLS LAUNDRY SOAP

Every year, the U.S. tosses over one billion plastic laundry jugs, enough to circle the planet six times. Instead of buying new jugs, try this 100 percent natural,



hypoallergenic powdered detergent. The first jug is free, and comes with a small packet of powder which you mix with water. When you run out, you buy a small refill packet and simply re-use the jug.

"I always feel guilty tossing those big plastic jugs of empty laundry detergent, even if it's into the recycling bin" says Meredith Pangrace. "This detergent solves that problem - and it seems especially worth it when I think of all the plastic I wouldn't be tossing in the future." Mygreenfills.com



"I'LL FLY AWAY" INSECT REPELLENT

Don't let mosquitos ruin your family's outdoor summer fun! Keep pests away with 100 percent natural, DEET-free insect repellent with a pleasant smell of eucalyptus, tea tree, and citronella infused with aloe vera. "I was surprised to see that the first ingredient is catnip" says *Your Teen* creative director Meredith Pangrace. "It smelled really nice and did a good job at keeping the bugs off me, as long as it was directly sprayed on exposed skin. It's even safe to apply on your face!" Mygreenfills.com

KRYPTONICS SKATEBOARD

Perfect for your favorite Skater Girl or Boy. Won't break the bank (it's available at Walmart and Target for under \$50), plus it comes in all kinds of patterns and colors. "It's a great board," says one 9th grade boy *Your Teen* asked to try it. "Just remember to loosen the bolt on the trucks so you can turn and steer." Gotcha. kryptonics.com



NEW BALANCE WOVEN 574 CLASSIC SNEAKER

Step back into classic retro style with this New Balance running shoe, featuring a suede/mesh upper for a premium look and an ENCAP® midsole for added support. "I am crazy about these sneakers!" says Ahuva Sunshine. "They are so light and incredibly comfortable. And the color combinations really draw attention. I wore them to a lacrosse game and got so many compliments. They are sturdy and supportive yet sleek and stylish!" NewBalance.com



JUST LIVE YOGA PANTS

These yoga pants don't just look (and feel) great—thanks to the company's proprietary YOLON material—they also give back, literally. That's because Just Live donates 10 percent of its profits to charity. "They fit perfectly," says *Your Teen's* Brooke Siegler. "And there is a color or pattern for everyone!" justlive.com

PISTACHIO CHEWY BITES SNACKS

An all-natural, individually wrapped snack that is both delicious and provides the nutritional fuel for a summer on the go. Nutrient-rich pistachios combined with moist antioxidant cranberries supply the energy and nutrients you need in one bite-sized snack. As a bonus they are vegan, Kosher, gluten & GMO free. "These are SO good!" says Jessica Semel. "I would absolutely recommend them!" Pistachiochewybites.com



Sun Protection 101

Here's a statistic that probably won't surprise you: less than one-third of American youths practice effective sun protection, according to the Centers for Disease Control.

That's a problem because the more sunburns a teenager gets, the

higher the risk of developing skin cancer as an adult. What are best practices? *Your Teen* asked Dr. Mary Yurko, a pediatric dermatologist with the Helen Devos Children's Hospital in Grand Rapids, Michigan.

1. Use a minimum SPF 30 sunscreen.

The label should say "broad spec-

trum," so it protects against UVA and UVB rays. If your teenager will be in and around water, the label should also say "water resistant."

Note: SPF 30 blocks 97 percent of the sun's rays. A higher SPF will block slightly more, but no amount of SPF can block 100 percent of the sun's rays.

2. Use a generous amount—about an ounce and a half—and reapply every two hours.

Teenagers who prefer sprays should spray the sunscreen directly into their hands, then rub it on. "Don't inhale the spray," cautions Yurko.

3. Cover up.

If a cute sundress, funky hat, or cool t-shirt will get your teen-

ager to cover up in the sun, it's well worth the cost.

4. Remind, remind, remind—just as you would for any other risky behavior.

"You're trying to establish healthy habits that last through your teenager's whole life," says Yurko. "Your message is that you can go out with your friends and have a fun time, but be sensible."

And if your teenager gets a sunburn? "Use a damp towel, so it feels cooler and doesn't hurt as much," recommends Yurko. "You can put on a moisturizer with aloe or soy that feels a little cooling. You can take ibuprofen to turn down inflammation." ■



Photo: Beth Segal



Family Meetings

School. Work. Jobs. Sports. Your family is busy, and it can be difficult to spend time together. Regular family meetings can help set aside time to hang out, talk about specific issues, and even prevent some stresses from spilling over into your day-to-day life.

"When my kid wants something from me during the week—I need this ... now—I will respond that I'll be happy to talk about that at the Sunday meeting," says Bruce Feiler, author of *The Secrets of Happy Families* and an advocate for regular family meetings.

Here're how to add family meetings to your routine:

Meet at a regular time. Try the same time and day each week. Plan to spend from 20 minutes to an hour. *Note:* Anticipate that your teenagers may

5

Annoying Things Our Parents Do

By Jake Van De Walle

The terminal condition of being a teenager is that we will be (seemingly) perpetually annoyed. It's our age, partly. It could be school, work, peers, or society in general. But often, we are annoyed with our almost always well-meaning parents. Here's why.

#1: YOU DON'T NOTICE THE GOOD WE DO

A lot of kids I know have jobs, school, and multiple extra-curriculars to deal with. They're doing one or several community service projects, and they're working extra hard at a sport or exercise routine. They take every advanced course the school offers, and then some. They're up until—or past—one in the morning getting all their work done so that they'll pass all those classes with flying colors. And they'll still be called lazy because they haven't taken out the trash on time. Maybe this doesn't describe every teen, but it often feels like our flops gather much more attention than our efforts.

#2: YOU PRESS THE THINGS WE DON'T WANT TO TALK ABOUT

If your teen comes home from school and seems down, or stops hanging out with

a friend they used to like, or won't talk about how things are going in an extracurricular, ask them why. If they don't want to talk about it, let it go. Teens hate to be forced to talk about things that they haven't fully worked out themselves yet, and we feel cornered if we have to.

#3: YOU MONITOR OUR ACTIVITIES (ESPECIALLY WITHOUT TELLING US)

Parents like to know the password to their teens' online accounts, to be accessed in case of an emergency. That's fine, and totally understandable. But some parents grow too invasive and take this idea uncomfortably far. Constantly checking a teen's browsing history, or checking every e-mail they receive, makes a teen feel wronged. Even worse is when the monitoring is done in secret. Constant breathing down a teen's neck can destroy mutual trust if it goes on for too long.

#4: YOU GET ANGRY WHEN WE STICK UP FOR OURSELVES

Teenagers get this all the time. During an argument, they feel (sometimes rightly) that their voice isn't being heard. So they object that they are being treated unfairly, only to be told that they are "back-talking" and need to be quiet. From a young age, kids are taught to stick up for themselves—in fact, it's their right.

But suddenly the tables are turned when parents are concerned, and that double standard is really irritating.

#5: YOU DEMAND OUR RESPECT

It's important to make the distinction between two different implied definitions of the word "respect" in this case. Respect can mean (1) respect as authority or (2) respect as a person. These two connotations are often confused. Sometimes, when adults speak of mutual respect, they mean that if a teen doesn't respect them as authority, they won't respect the teen as a person in return. But sometimes parents need to remember that they need to earn respect as authority. It is reasonable to expect your teen to respect you as a person. But teens do not accept "I am your mother/father, and you must respect me" as a valid claim. Demanding respect as authority will always lead to resentment from a teen.

Jake Van De Walle is a teen writer from Ohio.



not be thrilled about this. Stick with it until it becomes just another part of your routine.

Pick a style. Some families choose a roundtable style, where every family member gets a turn to talk. Other families might prefer an agenda.

Determine how you'll make decisions. Some families make decisions by simple majority vote. Other families may prefer to make decisions by consensus, so the children can't outnumber the adults, and the adults maintain their right to the final say.

Save time for compliments. To set a positive tone, talk about good things, too. Thank each person for some help given during the week. Ask people to talk about something good that happened to them that week.

End with something fun. Make a special treat. Watch a movie or Sunday night football. And don't forget to make plans for a fun activity for the next time, so you have something to look forward to. ■



RECIPE

Ginger Crinkles

Simple and lip-smackingly delicious. These cookies from Helene Godin's By the Way Bakery won't last long.

Makes 3 dozen

INGREDIENTS:

- 2 1/3 cups flour mix
- 2 teaspoons baking soda
- 1/2 plus 1/8 teaspoon xanthan gum
- 1/4 teaspoon salt
- 1 tablespoon ground ginger
- 1/2 teaspoon ground cloves
- 1/2 cup candied ginger, diced
- 3/4 cup organic shortening
- 1 cup, packed light brown sugar
- 1 egg
- 1/4 cup molasses
- 3 tablespoons (approx) Demerara sugar for rolling

DIRECTIONS:

1. In a medium bowl, whisk together flour, baking soda, xanthan gum, salt and spices.
2. Place candied ginger and 2 tablespoons dry ingredients in a food processor and pulse until pieces are coarsely chopped. Set aside.
3. Beat together shortening with the sugar at medium speed until well combined.
4. Add the egg and molasses and continue mixing until well combined.
5. Reduce speed and add dry ingredients and ginger.
6. Refrigerate over night.
7. Preheat oven to 375 degrees. Line baking sheets with parchment paper.
8. Shape dough into 1" balls, roll in Demerara sugar and place on baking sheet. Bake 10-12 minutes until lightly browned.
9. Let cookies cool for 3-5 minutes on cookie sheet, then remove to a wire rack until cool.



Read our interview with Helene Godin at bitly.com/YT-Godin



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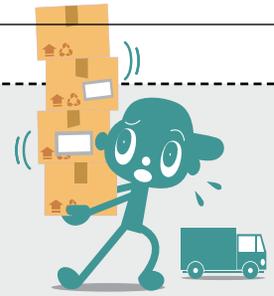
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MOVE-OUT SKILLS 101: EMAIL ETIQUETTE

There's no doubt that technology has fundamentally changed the way teenagers communicate —whether it's 140 characters on Twitter, acronyms for texting, or doodles on a snap. But this shorthand is not always appropriate in an email, especially one to, say, a teacher or boss. Our job is to help them understand the distinctions.

Here are some email etiquette tips to review with your teen:

- **Exercise the 'Golden Rule.'** If you wouldn't speak to the person that way face-to-face, then don't do it online. Tone is notoriously difficult to decipher online, so try to sound positive and courteous.
- **Remember, everything you post online is public.** You have no control over where your message goes once you've hit "Send"; it can be saved and forwarded by any recipient who chooses to do so. Words can come back to hurt people, destroy friendships, and ruin careers.
- **Grammar and punctuation matter.** Write in complete sentences with correct grammar. Always check spelling and punctuation, especially in business emails. Save the emoticons and decorative fonts for emails to friends.
- **DON'T USE ALL CAPS.** In an email, all caps is the same as shouting at someone.
- **Don't email when you're angry.** It's never a good idea to hit "Send" when you're emotional. Take some time to clear your head before you deal with the situation. This will help you refrain from saying something that you later regret.
- **Don't use a silly email address.** You will use your email address for college applications, job applications, resumes, and scholarship opportunities. Does it make a good impression? If not, reset it.
- **Answer your emails.** Respond to emails within the same time span you would a phone call. Same day is best.
- **Human contact still matters.** Don't communicate electronically at the expense of personal interaction. There's a reason people often need to discuss things face-to-face, and there are times when no substitute will do.

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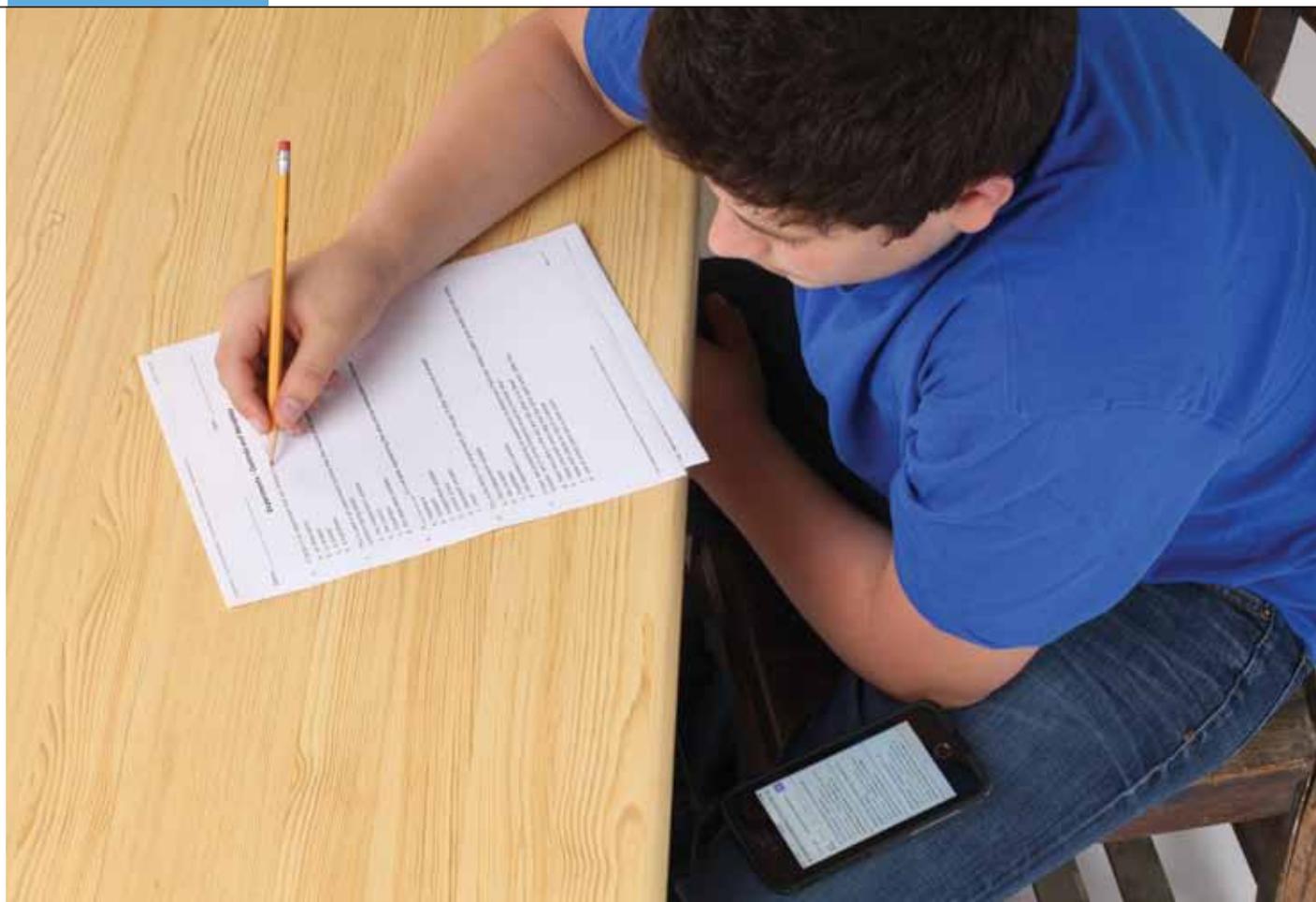


Photo: Beth Segal

Technology makes cheating even easier

By Jane Parent

Cheating is nothing new. Technology, however, has enabled students to take academic dishonesty to an entirely new level.

Passing notes during a test? So old school, when students can text or screenshot each other answers during a test. “Teens are really good at texting,” says Scott Schober, a cyber-security expert. “They keep their phone in their pocket, and without even looking at it, can shoot a text to a friend in the room, or a confidant outside the classroom, to look up answers.”

Students use their smartphones to access shared Google Docs and cut and paste answers into their essays. Or they create a closed Facebook group, divide up an assignment, and share answers with each other by text message.

And it’s not just smartphones; it’s Bluetooth devices with a two-way wireless microphones. Cameras the size of a button. “The Apple Watch gives a student more computing capability on his wrist than Fortune 500 companies had just a decade ago,” warns Schober.

So what is going on with all this cheating? Maybe it isn’t all that surprising, what with national headlines about educators in Atlanta fudging standardized testing results, allegations of large-scale cheating in elite institutions such as Harvard and Stanford, or scandals involving students hiring someone to take the SAT. In a survey by the Educational Testing Service, students who admit to cheating on tests or written assignments say that they do so because they are under so much pressure to succeed. Revelations of cheating scan-

dals fuel the perception that their peers are all cheating, and many students feel that they need to cheat simply to keep up.

“It’s partly our fault as a society,” says Dr. Teresa Fishman, director of the International Center for Academic Integrity at Clemson University. “We attach so much importance to such a small number of outcomes such as semester grades, SAT scores, GPA, that we have created a situation where there is an enormous incentive to gain any advantage, no matter how small.

“Students use their smartphones to access shared Google Docs and cut and paste answers into their essays.”

“Students feel enormous pressure to get the grades and test scores they believe they need for future success.”

Who’s most likely to cheat? Often, it’s students who are under a lot of outside pressure to deliver. “If grade motivation is intrinsic to the student, it doesn’t affect their propensity to cheat,” explains Fishman. “If the pressure for grades is external—coming from parents for example—then the student is more likely to cheat. The message you are giving your children definitely has an effect on the likelihood of them cheating.”

The ramifications of cheating can last well beyond high school into college, and even into the workplace. “If you cheated in high school to get into a good college, then chances are you will realize you didn’t have the skills to get in,” says Fishman, “and you will now feel you have to cheat in college to keep up with other students.”

Research shows that cheaters experience greater levels of unhappiness, insecurity, and stress. Further, students who cheat often do not learn how to engage in the creative process or develop the critical think-

ing skills they were supposed to, and subsequently find that they are unprepared for the workplace.

“There’s a lot of discussion about millennials and their insecurity and lack of confidence in the workplace,” says Fishman. “Some of those kids are insecure because they know they do not have the skill set that employers expect them to have.”

On the flip side, schools are taking advantage of high-tech methods to catch cheaters. The Pocket Hound, a wireless device the size of a deck of cards, allows teachers

to detect and pinpoint nearby active cellphone transmissions. Another gadget, the Mantis, detects Bluetooth devices and includes a directional antenna to help teachers locate cheating partners. Antiplagiarism software such as Turnitin enables teachers to scan and compare word phrases for plagiarized work.

“Nothing is going to completely eliminate cheating,” cautions Schober. “But the goal is to decrease the rate of cheating and hopefully prevent some kids who might be tempted.” ■

KIDS LOOKING FOR SOMETHING TO DO THIS SUMMER?

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Earning Power

What to do with the summer paycheck?

By Rebecca Meiser

After years of summers spent in camp or just hanging around the neighborhood, your teenager just got his first summer job—and his first paycheck.

Hallelujah!!, you think. Is it too soon to start talking Roth IRAs?

Your teen, meanwhile, is just as excited, but for entirely different reasons: Shopping spree!, he thinks. Who wants to join?

What's a parent to do?

Start with a conversation about the real world, financial experts say. Summer jobs are a training ground for full-time employment, when your teen will be responsible for big-ticket expenses like car payments, insurance, and groceries.

"It's great for teenagers to make their own decisions about money because in a few years they'll be an adult and in full control of their bank account," says Paula Pant, a personal finance writer and owner of the financial advice site AffordAnything.com. "But that means it's important for teenagers to start understanding budgets."

You can start, experts say, by asking your teen to cover extraneous items, like gasoline, clothing, or entertainment. "Anything that is not a basic necessity is absolutely fair to ask a teen to pay for," says Pant.

But these conversations need to begin before that first paycheck is in hand. That way you can avoid setting unrealistic expectations.

"If nothing is stated or talked about, the teen might assume, for instance, that mom or dad is going to pay for the cost of their prom dress," Pant says. "Then a problem comes in, if a month before prom, mom or dad breaks the news that they're not going to pay for it. That's not very fair to the teen because

it hasn't allowed her adequate time to come up with a contingency plan."

And saving—another important skill for teenagers to learn—takes time.

"Your teenager is probably making minimum wage—or just over it—and if they're trying to pay for something that costs \$500, they need to put in a lot of hours to save up for it, even if they are great planners already," Pant says.

These real-world exercises can start even before your teen gets a job. "When our kids reached 14, we figured out how much money we spent on them each month and put it in a checking account for them to manage," says Dave Ramsey, a personal money-management expert and host of the nationally syndicated radio program, *The Dave Ramsey Show*. "We had them pay for all of their expenses themselves out of that account, which helped them understand how to budget and manage their money."

With your help, your teen—hopefully—will make smart financial de-

isions about his paycheck. But if he decides instead to embark on that shopping spree—well, look at it as a learning experience.

"It's far better for a teen to make a bad decision at age 16 or 17, when they're under your roof and the consequences are not very dire," says Pant. "If they don't get that freedom to mess up now, then they are more at risk to make bad financial decisions at 35, when the decisions have much more expensive consequences."

Plus that \$400 fuzzy, pink, animal-print jacket can always be returned. ■



Photo: Beth Segal



Kelly Corrigan

We talk teenagers with the author of *Glitter & Glue* and frequent *Medium.com* contributor.

What's been your biggest surprise with parenting teenagers?

I thought I'd be better at it. I thought I was a natural. I thought I was cool and funny and in touch with them, and that that would somehow matter. That it would have some impact on what our daily life together was like. All of that, whether it's true or not, is all totally eclipsed by the fact that I'm the mother. That defines everything. All of my charms are useless.

Have you had any specific revelations?

It surprises me how hard it is to hold the line. I'm very sympathetic to my children. Even when I'm furious when them, I'm actually quite sympathetic. I want to be stricter and firmer than I am. I want to be as unyielding as my mother. But I can't do it. I can't hold the line.

Can you share any an example?

I often find myself in these re-negotiations after the fact. I'll lay down a law, like no cell phone for a week. My daughter will go quiet, and my mood will lift. Maybe two or three hours later, she'll come back in the room and she'll be really sweet and contrite. She'll start suggesting alternative punishments. Before I know it, we're snuggled up. We're talking about how if she does all the laundry in the house, then she can have her cell phone back. I can never decide if I am modeling flexibility or if I'm inadvertently modeling pushover.

Why does that worry you?

I really worry about the manipulation thing. I think if a kid is being really nice to get something, then when that kid

goes to sleep at night they may feel a little scummy about themselves.

What was your mom like?

She wasn't open to manipulation. I think I want them to like me more than my mother needed or wanted me to like her. I don't think that was part of her motivation when she raised us.

You have a bit of a potty mouth. How does that affect your girls?

I have done them a disservice. Particularly with the F-word. I've seen some Instagram comments on my daughter's feed. Sometimes she uses the F-word, and she seems so harsh.

How do your girls feel about your work?

They're not super aware of it. Like most teenagers, they're fairly self-absorbed, which is right on time developmentally. I don't think that it plays a very big role in their life, what I do and say.

So you don't ask permission to write about them?

I haven't yet because in all three books they've been so young. If I were to write about them now, I would definitely feel like I owed it to them to share any passages that touched on their lives. To be honest, I'm going to write privately about that for a while, and let some time pass before I put anything about them in print. It's too dicey right now. It's the same way that a mom should never dance in front of her children's friends, or sing along to the song on the radio. Everything is a reflection on them. They're utterly self-focused.

I'd like to turn the tables and ask some of the questions you end your interviews with on Medium.com. So, if you had a year to get really good at anything, what would you try?

Writing. I would write in a way that I never have before, or I would write with

focus. If I could bring myself to let go of all my other projects, and just try to martial all my energy and focus and attention and intellect on a single project, mainly a novel, I would like to do that.

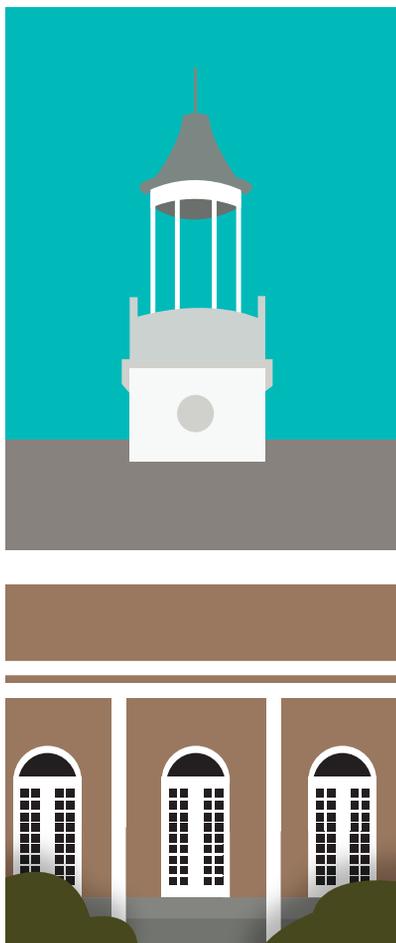
If your mother wrote a book about you, what would it be called?

Quite Competent.

What would you like to see fixed in your lifetime?

I want to make life easier for the desperately poor. I would like there not to be this huge disparity of what life can be. These children don't have any of the building blocks that they need to be successful in school. If you can't be successful in school, you're never going to get a great job. That just makes me sick that you could be three years old and so far behind that your odds of catching up are minimal. ■

—Interview by Susan Borison



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The Language of Flowers

by Vanessa Diffenbaugh

PARENT REVIEW

By **William Lucas Walker**

The most romantic bit of dialogue I've run across lately? "When I saw you jump the fence, I turned on the oven."

This unsentimental, matter-of-fact declaration of love near the end of Vanessa Diffenbaugh's gorgeous first novel emerges with the force of a jonquil bursting through the earth, emerging with unexpected glory from a forgotten bulb planted in the dead of winter.

The utterance will change everything for Victoria Jones, an isolated young woman with issues whose story begins as she is ejected from a northern California foster system on her 18th birthday and thrust into a world she has no clue how to navigate.

Victoria is not your typical literary heroine. Not beautiful. Not charming.

Not witty. Barely verbal. Abandoned by her mother at birth, Victoria spends years pin-balling among strangers in foster and group homes. The experience has left her feral, angry, and wary. Trusting no one and nothing, including herself.

Her willed isolation renders her unable to relate normally to other human beings. She compensates by relying on the only form of expression she believes in, one outmoded since the Victorian era—the intricately coded "language of flowers."

This mastery of an arcane language is all that remains of a broken childhood relationship with the only foster mother who fully understood or cared for her. The mysteries and secrets of their complex, ill-fated bond are revealed in alternating chapters that counterpoint and gradually illuminate Victoria's challenges as she attempts to maneuver life outside "the system."

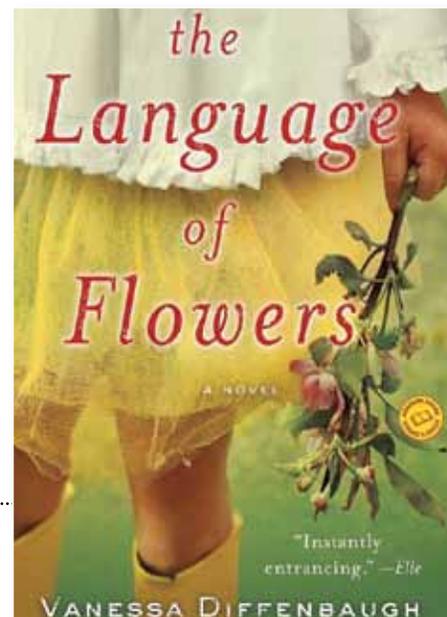
This is how we discover Victoria in the novel's early pages—hiding homeless and hungry in a public park. She finds a way to parlay her knowledge of flowers and their meaning into the only job for which she's qualified—assisting at a florist's.

These two themes—hunger and hiding—will recur repeatedly, in different ways, but always expressing the two most salient facts of Victoria's emotional life.

Once she is employed and able to pay rent, Victoria chooses the living space she feels she deserves: a closet. Windowless, airless, and damp, this dark hole in the center of San Francisco symbolizes the void between girlhood and womanhood in which Victoria will bury herself like a bulb.

The closet will become, despite her best efforts, a place of gestation. In its loamy darkness, Victoria will ultimately learn to forgive herself, nurture life, and discover the terror and wonder of blooming in the light of day.

William Lucas Walker is a television writer/producer and author of The Huffington Post humor column "Spilled Milk."



TEEN REVIEW

By **Elizabeth Walker-Ziegler**

I have never read a book so inspiring in all of my 14 years. Vanessa Diffenbaugh has written a book describing the life of Victoria, an orphan who goes from being in and out of foster care, to becoming homeless, hired at a flower shop, to running her own business built on a foundation of her past.

As the book opens, Victoria is leading a dilapidated life with apathy and no hope for the future. Then she meets Renata, a woman who owns a flower shop called Bloom and responds to Victoria's cry for help.

Victoria has one passion—flowers. While working at Bloom, memories of her childhood begin flooding back, and every other chapter in the novel becomes a flashback. Victoria is profoundly chal-

lenged with trust, making her question whether indulging in a job at Bloom will benefit her. After the first few weeks, Victoria learns the ways of flowers, deepening her connection with their language, and Renata's opinion toward her.

Later on, Victoria meets Grant, the nephew of her foster parent, Elizabeth. At the moment he is introduced, she feels a connection similar to the one she feels with flowers. But after a romantic encounter, and Victoria finds herself in a life-changing experience, she decides she must relinquish current relationships with her loved ones.

The flashbacks intertwined with the present gave me a sense of the complexity of obstacles Victoria faces. An example: in flashback, Victoria is forced

to leave her foster parent, while in the present she is forced to leave a loved one. This timeline shows how Victoria has changed and wants to push past these obstacles, even as she clings to the past.

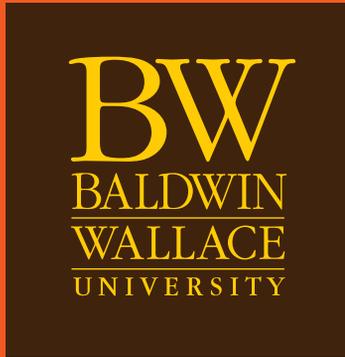
After a year, feeling guilt over her absence, Victoria returns to Grant and mends the other broken relationships in her life..

From this book, I learned that the things that can carry you farthest are memories. The content in this story is breathtaking and life-changing. Victoria learned to heal and forgive and cherish her life "imperfectly, and without roots."

Elizabeth Walker-Ziegler is a rising freshman at Immaculate Heart High School in Los Angeles.

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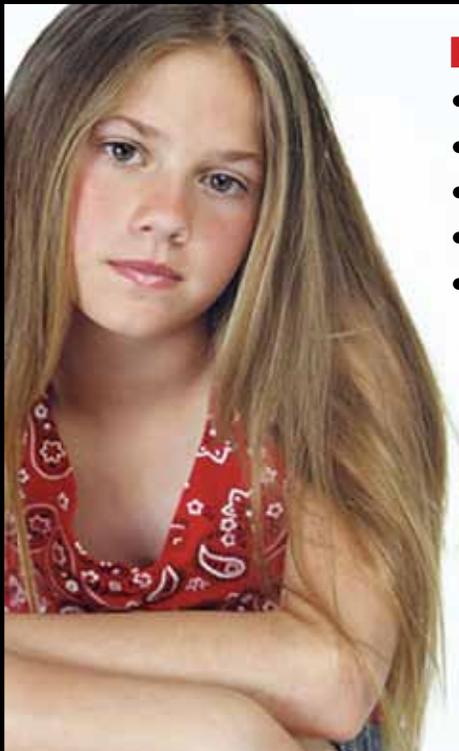


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Version I 11.17.14

Perspectives reflects the full tapestry of our society: from parents, teens and professionals.

Living with Anxiety

Parent 1

By **Anonymous**

CONTRIBUTORS

Parent's
Point



Anonymous

Teen 1's
Point



Anonymous

Teen 2's
Point



Anonymous

Professional



Dr. Molly McVoy

It happened again just yesterday, out of the blue: an innocent call from a friend whom my husband and I had not seen in a while. He was coming to our town to watch his son play a big lacrosse game against our local high school. Sure we said, we would be glad to meet up with him. As we walked behind the arena where our son used to play ice hockey to the lacrosse field, we were struck by that all-too-familiar wave of sadness. There, lined up along the field, were all the folks that we used to know. Out playing the game were many of our son's former hockey teammates, boys he had grown up with.

Our son, a natural athlete, should have been out there, too. It was one of those games, historic in nature; the visiting team had been undefeated for many years. They were the team to beat, and it was a terrific game. It came down to an overtime win. As the boys from our town rushed the field in euphoria, we were crushed by the fact that our son was not out there among them. He was in fact home playing on the computer and had no interest in going to the game with us at all. It was another painful reminder of the important social experiences our son was missing out on because his anxiety forced him to quit—lacrosse, soccer, baseball, and eventually the one sport he truly excelled at, ice hockey.

Living with a child who has an anxiety disorder is complicated, frustrating, exhausting, isolating, and heart-breaking. It's not at all what we expected raising a child would be like.

Children who suffer from mental illness rarely have only one diagnosis. Our 16-year-old son has also been diagnosed with a rip-roaring case of ADHD, peppered with oppositional defiance disorder (ODD), and a sprinkled with obsessive compulsive disorder (OCD). But it is the anxiety disorder that causes the most trouble.

Anxiety is the most common emotional disorder, and it appears to be on the increase. It is one of those invisible disabilities that people don't understand, so they often pass judgment. Our completely "normal-looking," bright, funny, kind, sensitive, athletic boy with amazing coordination and balance can be taken down without warning by a wave of nausea and stomachaches. Anxiety is related to our survival instinct. It is a fear (think fight or flight) response when there is no actual danger or threat, like a false alarm ringing within your body.

The telephone calls from the school nurse began in the third grade. Our son was not feeling well and complaining of pains in his stomach, so we needed to come and get him. Once we were in the car and pulling away from the school, a wave of relief would wash over his body and he was fine. The same thing would



happen while he was playing sports. During games he was often sidelined because of nausea and stomach pain. This would happen on and off until 8th grade, when he was in such distress, we needed to hospitalize him. It was then that we decided to pull him from the public school system, and it was then that the bed-wetting (which periodically plagued him from September to June) stopped.

We learned early on not to ask our son if he wanted to go and do “xyz” because no matter how great a place or fun an experience it would be, he would always say no. When our son was in 5th grade, we made the mistake of surprising the kids with a trip to Disney World. He began to cry as we pulled into the airport and would not get out of the car even though he knew Disney World was a kid’s paradise. If he had no reference or understanding of what the experience entailed, it was safer and less anxiety-producing to just say no.

He has always been much more comfortable staying home playing video games and socially isolating himself, which in turn isolates his parents, too. The ongoing battle to limit time with electronic gadgets—the one pastime that soothes our son, makes him forget his anxiety, and calms his hyperactive, ADHD brain—has driven a wedge in our relationship with him. He resents the fact that we are so strict with electronic time and that we force him to do things

that he has no interest in doing. It is exhausting to “convince” our son to participate in extracurricular activities. We work extremely hard to get him to every meeting or rehearsal. We have worked for years with many therapists, doctors, and psychiatrists on behavior modification psychotherapy and different medications. These remedies have provided some relief, but battling anxiety is still a daily struggle for our son, and for us.

When internalized, the emotional pain of anxiety manifests in depression and loss of self-esteem. If the emotional pain is too much to bear, he will cut. When externalized, the angst is expressed in rage-filled tantrums.

Because of our son’s inability to regulate his emotions, his peers have rejected him and he has been subjected to teasing and criticism. He is extremely sensitive to his perception that other people disapprove of him. This has led him, at times, to play the part of people-pleaser, always making sure other individuals approve of him. In addition, the pain of failure is so great that he often refuses to try anything unless he is assured quick and easy success. Taking a chance on something novel is too big an emotional risk.

When left untreated, teens with anxiety disorders are at higher risk to perform poorly in school, miss out on important social experiences, and engage in substance abuse. They will avoid sports and other extracurricular

activities, and their self esteem suffers.

If our son can’t defeat his anxiety (that “bully in his brain”), our fear is that his life will become stunted and limited, even more than it already has. But there is always hope, and we try to remain optimistic and extol the victories along the way, no matter how small and insignificant they might seem to “typical” families. For instance, considering our son struggles with anxiety, it is nothing short of a miracle that he is performing in his second musical. Though his parts have been small, and we struggle to get him into the car for every rehearsal, he is singing and dancing on a stage in front of an audience, and this is something to celebrate.

The author lives in New England with her husband and two sons, 13 and 16, both of whom were adopted and struggle--to varying degrees--emotionally and socially with learning and executive function disabilities, anxiety, ADHD, reading social cues, and thus making and keeping friends.

Teen 1

By Anonymous

Some of my earliest memories feature my therapist. I was diagnosed with anxiety as a young child. While other children were struck by fears on a fleeting basis, I could not stop thinking and obsess-

ing over them, using my vast imagination to create new “what if” scenarios in which they would play out. When a tiger escaped from a zoo in a nearby city, I was petrified the tiger would enter my second floor bedroom. Together with my therapist, I built a tiger trap fit for my bedroom window to finally move past that.

Despite being a high-achieving honors student and successful athlete on two of my high school’s sports teams, I was constantly pondering “what ifs.” What if I am only smart enough to succeed in 9th grade, but 10th grade will really show my true colors and I won’t make it through? What if I can only shine in the context of my parochial high school but not in college?

With my heart beating at an exponentially high rate and my stomach in knots, these were the thoughts I was entertaining while other students were thinking about where the next party was or which sports team won last night.

My anxiety reached its zenith when I started “hanging out” with John during my freshman year of college. In my eyes, John was perfect—he was a brilliant honors student who spoke multiple languages and studied abroad across Europe. He was extremely kind, handsome and witty. As we started getting to know each other and began dating, my “what ifs” went on steroids. What if I am not good enough for him? What if I gain weight and he thinks I am fat? What if I don’t crack the right joke or sound intelligent enough? What if his friends think I am a loser?

When he broke up with me, I was devastated. I feared seeing him on campus, especially with a different girl. I was so anxious about this that I would skip events I thought he might attend. I would trip on the sidewalk because I was looking in various directions to see if he was in my vicinity. With prodding from my concerned roommate, I sched-

uled my first appointment with a psychiatrist at the university health center. She prescribed antidepressants that really helped me get out of that dark place I was in. The medication was far from perfect and had tangible side effects, but for me at that time the benefits outweighed the costs. The medication also helped me relax about my academic performance and potential, allowing me to truly enjoy college.

Most of the academic worries I encountered proved futile. I worked hard throughout high school and college and reaped the rewards of my success recently when I received a full scholarship to a great law school.

My anxiety inhibited the natural growth of confidence I should have enjoyed after proving myself over and over again. I have “impostor syndrome”—feeling that I’m a fraud and don’t deserve my success. It’s a complex that unfortunately plagues so many high-achieving women and girls.

Those teenage years were tough, but in retrospect they pushed me to work hard and not take success for granted—giving me life skills that are important foundations for continued achievement as an adult.

Teen 2

By Anonymous

When I was 15, I wrote this letter to my mother. It represents how I felt at that time. Overwhelmed. Panicked. Lost.

Dear Momma,

I know it has been hard on you knowing that your kid has to deal with anxiety and depression, but it is just as hard for me knowing that your support is very limited. I have been

suffering from panic attacks and have cut myself all over my body. I have crazy suicidal thoughts. I dissociate from my body, which makes everything feel flat and two dimensional. I feel like I am in the picture, and I am in focus but everything around me is a big blur. Sometimes I just need you to be there for me. I need you to distract me from the thoughts in my head. I need you to make me laugh. I need you to be sweet with me when I am sad or feel depressed or scared. High school has been extremely difficult for me. I am so shy and I have difficulty interacting with my peers and my teachers. When I tell you I am afraid to talk to my teachers, you get so mad at me, which then makes me feel scared of telling you my feelings. It has felt to me THAT the more I needed you, the further away you have moved. It does not help me that you tell me over and over that you are sorry that I am sad or anxious. Please stop apologizing then going on about your day like I don't exist. You have been consumed with your boyfriend's needs, not mine.

Mother, I am a teenager and I know I don't know much, but I do know I have tried almost everything I know to feel better and I don't. I am asking you once again if I could get some help. You see mom, I want to go to college and have a good job. I don't want to stay in the house and hide anymore. I know you are afraid to admit that your kid has issues, but I do and I am SCREAMING for help!

My mother responded positively to my letter and she found a counselor for me. I have been in counseling from ages 15-17, which I highly recommend for any teenager struggling with anxiety and/or depression. Therapy has been such a positive experience for me.

“Around 15 to 20 percent of youth will be diagnosed with an anxiety disorder during their childhood.”

The therapy office has felt like a sanctuary. It feels like an escape. I have enjoyed having someone I can really talk to, someone who won't judge me. I like that I have never been pushed to talk or do something I did not want to do. I like opening up. It feels like I'm letting go of anxiety. I like having so many good ways to cope with my anxiety and depression. I like that I am not self-destructive anymore. I like that I have more energy to tackle my problems. I have enjoyed becoming a better listener and speaker. I like that I don't feel so alone anymore.

I actually like myself.

I just graduated from high school and I am beginning college. I am really glad, but also so scared and excited all at the same time!

Professional

By Dr. Molly McVoy

Aesop wrote, “A crust eaten in peace is better than a banquet partaken in anxiety.”

Those who suffer with anxiety disorders will understand what Aesop is referring to—no matter how wonderful, magical, enjoyable, beautiful, or exciting the surroundings are, if one cannot enjoy it, it is meaningless. Anxiety disorders can cause beautiful, pleasurable, positive things to become completely unbearable and miserable.

Anxiety is the most common mental health disorder diagnosed in childhood, more common even than Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) and depression.

Around 15 to 20 percent of youth will be diagnosed with an anxiety disorder during their childhood. In addition, anxiety is an important component of most other psychiatric illnesses, and often a component of chronic medical illness.

Anxiety, or “worry,” is often under-

estimated in its power. “Stop worrying about that.” “What’s the big deal?” “It’s just a worry ...” These are just some of the phrases many of my patients and their families have heard before finally coming to my office for treatment.

Because anxiety is so underestimated and so common, many families struggle with it for years before they finally present to a therapist or a psychiatrist. “Worry,” “anxiety,” and “stress” are hard concepts for kids to understand and express. Consequently, over the years, I’ve learned to be on the lookout. When families and I discover that anxiety is what has been crippling their lives for years, I feel relief, and the families often feel understood for the first time in a long time.

I feel relief, because, although incredibly impairing and overwhelming, anxiety disorders are some of the most treatable disorders in all of pediatric psychiatry. Completely. Treatable. With the right combination of therapy and, in some cases, medication, children can flourish and succeed, the anxiety no longer running their lives.

First, however, they need to get the right diagnosis. Anxiety can present in all different forms—it can make adolescents irritable and angry—which can make those adolescents seem oppositional and “bad.” It can make them distracted and disorganized, a reason it’s sometimes mistaken for ADHD. Anxiety can make children fear things that aren’t real and, therefore, act in ways that seem unusual.

Typical signs of anxiety are difficulty sleeping, many unexplained physical complaints (stomach aches, headaches, etc.), and “worries”—often presented to parents in the form of unending questions about “what if,” “when,” and “why.” Avoidance of things that are stressful is also quite common in anxiety disorders.

Complicating all of this is the fact that anxiety, fear, and worry are a nor-

mal part of childhood. Nearly every child has periods in which they are more fearful—“stranger anxiety” as an infant; fear of the dark and monsters under the bed as a toddler; fear of not fitting in as a school-age child and teenager. All of these are typical.

The difference between “normal” anxiety and an anxiety disorder is the way the child and family are able to respond. If the anxiety or fear persists for months or is completely unmanageable for the child and family, then it may be more than a “phase,” and it is worth seeking help.

Therapy, particularly, cognitive behavior therapy (CBT), is the gold standard for the treatment of anxiety disorders. When done properly, CBT can give a child and a family a new understanding of the way they think and behave in response to anxiety—and, consequently, allow the child and family to run their lives, not the anxiety. If the anxiety is moderate or severe, medication can be helpful in addition to therapy. The selective serotonin reuptake inhibitors (SSRIs) are the medication most often prescribed for children with anxiety disorders—these include sertraline (Zoloft), fluoxetine (Prozac), citalopram (Celexa), and escitalopram (Lexapro), to name a few. Medications for anxiety, in general, are safe and effective.

The bottom line is anxiety disorders are common, under-diagnosed, and very impairing, while still incredibly treatable.

To finish, I will quote another author, one our teen readers may recognize, Veronica Roth, the author of *Divergent*: “I have to face the fear. I have to take control of the situation and find a way to make it less frightening.”

Dr. Molly McVoy is a psychiatrist and program director of the Department of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry at UH Case Medical Center.



TRAVEL WITH TEENS?

Yes it's Possible,
and Even Fun!

BY KATE POCOCK



If thoughts of spending an entire week in close quarters with your teen makes you think 'horror movie,' read on. Yes it's possible, even fun—and can be tremendously rewarding.

"I'm sorry mom, but for some reason, talking to you these days is physically painful for me," announced my 13-year-old daughter. How could the poor girl survive these upcoming mother-daughter years? More importantly, how could we get through the cruise I had just booked for our summer vacation, a seven-day sail around the Mediterranean Sea?

"Well, I guess we'd better ask for dinner companions," I replied. "Or it's going to be a very quiet week."

Teens can make for challenging travel companions. They like to sleep late, have a fixed sense of style or music (get ready for fashion boutiques or music stores rather than museums), and like to hang out with other teens whom you've barely met. And yet, traveling with them promotes opportunities for a lifetime of discussion. You'll find that with a little bit of input and a lot of planning, teens will actually display enthusiasm for historical sights, new cultural experiences, and action—whether it's rafting through whitewater, climbing a bell tower, riding horses across a desert, or embarking on a wildlife safari to see lions.

Here's how to have the best vacation ever with your teens:



1 LET THEM HELP PLAN THE TRIP

Give your teenagers a role in arranging your trip. “The most important thing when planning a vacation with teens is to involve them in the planning early on,” says Kyle McCarthy, co-founder and editor of the website of Family Travel Forum (myfamilytravels.com). Discuss possible itineraries and activities. “You need to make them stakeholders in the success of the trip so that they pitch in to make every day the best possible day.”

You might even share budget considerations for the trip. Would they rather splurge on an all-inclusive cruise with superstar musical entertainment, or embark on a wildlife expedition in a National Park, allowing money left over for that cool guitar they’d been eyeing?

“Give them the responsibility to plan, arrange things, and even help with the budget,” says Rainer Jenss, president and founder of the Family Travel Association, and a parent who has taken his boys around the world. “Say ‘OK, based on this amount of money, here’s what we can plan.’”

In our own family, each of the three teens was responsible for one day of vacation. It was up to them to do the research, then present it to the rest of the family, who would all abide by their choices. It’s how we all learned about Italian fashion, rode bikes along a Rail Trail, and snorkeled among turtles in the Caribbean Sea.



2 TAP INTO THEIR INTERESTS

Whether it’s baseball, beadwork, or blues guitar, teens are passionate about their pursuits. And parents can share some of that excitement. “My son has some interest in airplanes and aeronautics,” says Jenss. “So we’ve gone to air shows and aeronautical museums. This is something new to me. The tables have turned a bit.”

On one of our family trips, my husband and I wanted to forgo a touristy cruise to see glass blowers on the Italian island of Murano. But the teens persisted, and once home, our 14-year-old son declared it was a highlight of his trip. “I never knew that you could actually make glass,” he said. “That was so cool.” Today this son is an engineer.

Dr. Frances E. Jensen, chair of the Neurological Department of the University of Pennsylvania and author of *The Teenage Brain*, agrees. “Even if they pick something you really don’t want to do, show them that you respect that and participate.” It could turn out to be the most interesting excursion.

3 DON'T FORGET THE DOWNTIME

Don't plan every minute. Leave some hours unscheduled to allow time for wandering, checking the iPad (see our sidebar Taming Technology), feeding that bottomless pit stomach, or just hanging out with a new friend. "Parents expect teens to participate in everything, but teens have so many things going on, that you need to give them time on their own," says McCarthy.

That applies to mornings as well. Think twice about setting the alarm to hit the beach at sunrise. "It's not just humans," Jensen says. "All mammalian species need more sleep during adolescence." The reason? Sleep hormones are programmed to be released two hours later in the teen brain. "Getting a teenager up at 6 a.m. is like getting an adult up at 4 a.m.," she explains.

When possible, pick activities that are more of a match for your teenager's sleep needs. Late-night concerts or soirées that include a midnight fireworks show could be just the ticket to round off a perfect teen vacation day.



Taming Technology

Thinking about leaving the gadgets at home? Think again. It's become almost impossible to ban them outright, and you may also need them for practical reasons—to look up admission prices, consult maps, keep in touch with the office, or send photos to grandma to assure her that everyone is OK.

"The thought of getting unplugged on vacation has gone the way of the dodo," says Kyle McCarthy, co-founder and editor of the website Family Travel Forum. "Parents, too, are not always able to unplug."

The trick is to limit everyone's time on the devices. Otherwise, "you could actually have a kid on vacation that is spending more of their time on vacation texting people that they're on vacation than actually experiencing the vacation," says Dr. Frances E. Jensen, author

of *The Teenage Brain*. "They are not even enjoying or experiencing the place."



Some families organize a daily time to plug in, or limit it to taking and downloading photos, no texting allowed. Don't spring this on your teenager. Agree on a plan in advance.

One way to reconnect as a family is to pick a place with no WiFi, such as Yellowstone National Park, or a family lodge like Strathcona Park Lodge & Outdoor Education Centre on Vancouver Island. There, all manner of angst should fade away as you and your teens paddle canoes, roast marshmallows, dive into a lake after a beach sauna, and walk high up amongst the branches of the giant Douglas fir trees. Bon voyage!



4 KEEP IT ACTIVE

There is little time (or chance) for teens to grumble when they're kept active, whether they are riding a horse or riding waves on a surfboard. Teens love action, discovering new skills, and a bit of a thrill too. "It's an amazing time for discovery," says Jensen. "They take risks, test the limits. It's a natural state; that's part of who they are."

Often, scary is fun for teenagers. Take 14-year-old Spencer Kelly, whose family set out on a nighttime hike with headlamps through the rain forest of Belize. "We could hear the sounds of animals, and see the eyes of spiders; they were shining in the dark," he said. "Some were as big as your hand." He agreed that "adventure is way better than relaxation. A vacation is something you should remember."

5 TRAVEL WITH TEENS PROVIDES LIFELONG LESSONS

No matter where you go or what you do, your teens will learn important lessons, including how to get along with each other and their parents. "Teens are 'jacked up' for learning," says Jensen, "A teen brain is a learning brain."

It's also a time for teens to watch parent behavior—to see if you, too, brush your teeth and make your bed and how you react if another driver cuts you off in traffic.

And if the trip goes south fast? "It's up to the parent to stand back, take a breath, count to 10, and not over-react," says Jensen.

So it's a learning session for parents, too. What you really want to hear when the teens get home and meet up with their friends is, "That was the best vacation ever!"

As for that girl on the mother-daughter cruise? After trying to sneak into the Vatican wearing shorts, teasing me by throwing three coins into the Trevi Fountain (signifying impending marriage), and sailing past the volcano of Stromboli erupting flashes of orange into the sky, she laid her head on my shoulder and said, "Let's do this again sometime." Not so painful after all.





STAYCATIONS

by Jane Parent

Sometimes vacation just isn't in the cards, perhaps because of sports with "optional" practices you really can't miss, jobs, or college visits. Or maybe it's not in your budget right now; travel costs can add up fast, especially when vacation includes airfare, hotel, and food for your adult-sized eating machines. But that doesn't mean that you can't still have a great vacation at home as a family. With a little planning and preparation (and the comfort of sleeping in your own bed at night), a "staycation" can be an intentional time of fun and relaxation.

First, set some ground rules. The point of a staycation is to feel as much like a family getaway as possible, so decide in advance what

your family will and will not do during this time. That could include limiting screen time, phone usage, email, cooking, and chores.

Next, decide just what you will do on your staycation. Hold a family meeting to discuss your ideas and get input. If you like spontaneity, consider putting everyone's ideas into a hat, then picking one activity each day. If your family prefers more structure, use your ideas to develop an itinerary for the week. Set a reasonable budget. Get your home ready before the staycation starts. Clean, shop, and get the laundry done in advance. Get some takeout menus. Cook a few family favorites and put them in the freezer. Get everything ready so once your staycation starts, you can all relax.

Think of a few activities teens would enjoy:

- * Enjoy a spa day with manicures and pedicures.
- * Get a group for laser tag or paintball.
- * Take a trip to an outlet mall.
- * Go geocaching.
- * Try indoor rock climbing, a challenge rope course, or zip lining.
- * Take a day trip to a nearby town or national park.
- * Try a new restaurant.
- * Build a fire pit, s'mores. Add a movie for great family time.

Teens, however, can be very busy people, so their idea of vacation might just involve sleeping—and that's fine. "Down time is very important. If your usual morning routine is very hectic because of work and school, then I try to do the opposite of normal," says Samantha McGarry, author and parenting blogger. "Let them have a lazy morning, and plan an activity for later in the day. To set a vacation attitude, I try to be more flexible and to say yes more than no."

Please, No College Talk

by Claire Klodell

If you're on the way to a family vacation and don't hear, "Are we there yet?" at least 10 times, then are you really on a family vacation? As a 17-year-old girl with two sisters (ages 14 and 9), I hear this phrase whined more times than you can imagine. Yes, I'm even guilty of muttering it myself.

In high school, I became obsessed with traveling to Europe. I idolized the members of the band One Direction. I dreamed about visiting Versailles after Kimye's (Kim Kardashian and Kanye West) wedding party and of seeing the places my

teacher talked about in AP European History. When my family announced our plans to visit Europe, the look on my face was the same ecstatic expression as the audience members when Ellen Degeneres announces the "12 Days of Giveaways".

I couldn't believe it. All I could think about was, "What should I wear when I meet Harry Styles?"

In eighth grade, we learned about the Hero's Journey. In short, the hero takes a journey and is confronted with all kinds of challenges. In a way, our family vacations have a similar story-

line. In England, we were locked out of our apartment. In France, I was locked in a bathroom stall for 30 minutes. On our way home, United Airlines had too many passengers to fit us on our first flight—and our second flight was cancelled. We had to stay in the airport hotel for two days longer than planned.

Obviously, bad luck is no stranger to my family when it comes to vacations. We've left suitcases at home. I've had the blessing of food poisoning. My mother likes to call it, "The Clampetts go on vacation."

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“Our once fun-filled trips have transformed into glamorized college roadshows right before my eyes.”

Lately, that bad luck has taken another turn as I've begun the process of applying to college. In fact, you could say that college has invaded our family vacations. Wherever we go, my parents seem to find time to squeeze in a quick tour of whatever college is nearby. Our once fun-filled trips have transformed into glamorized college roadshows right before my eyes.

As much as I appreciate their efforts—dragging my sisters and me across the state to visit campuses that are now a blur in my mind—a vacation is meant to be an escape from reality. It's a time to live in the moment, make memo-

ries—and maybe a memorable sunburn along the way. The last thing I want to discuss is where I'm going to college. Ultimately, all of the questions my family asks always come back to college. My answers? “I'm not sure yet. Hanging in there.” What I wish I could say? “Please remove ‘college’ from your vocabulary. We're on vacation.”

Live a little. High school is stressful, especially since we've had the importance of getting into the “right” college ingrained into our minds ever since we entered elementary school. As crucial as college visits are, parents, for

the sake of our sanity, leave the ‘college’ word at home on vacation. For a week or two, it can't hurt to eliminate it from everyone's terminology.

Make the best of the time you have left together, even if your family resembles the Clampetts while it happens.

Claire Kodell is a high school student in Columbus, Ohio.



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Drug and Alcohol Treatment

What to do when experimentation crosses the line to substance use disorder

By Randi Mazzella

Why the Term *Substance Use Disorder*?

The term “substance abuse” is no longer used to describe an individual who is misusing drugs and/or alcohol. Today, experts instead use the term “substance use disorder.”

Substance use disorders are categorized as mild, moderate, or severe, and while an individual can be diagnosed in any of these categories, it’s only the last one—severe—that most experts consider addiction.

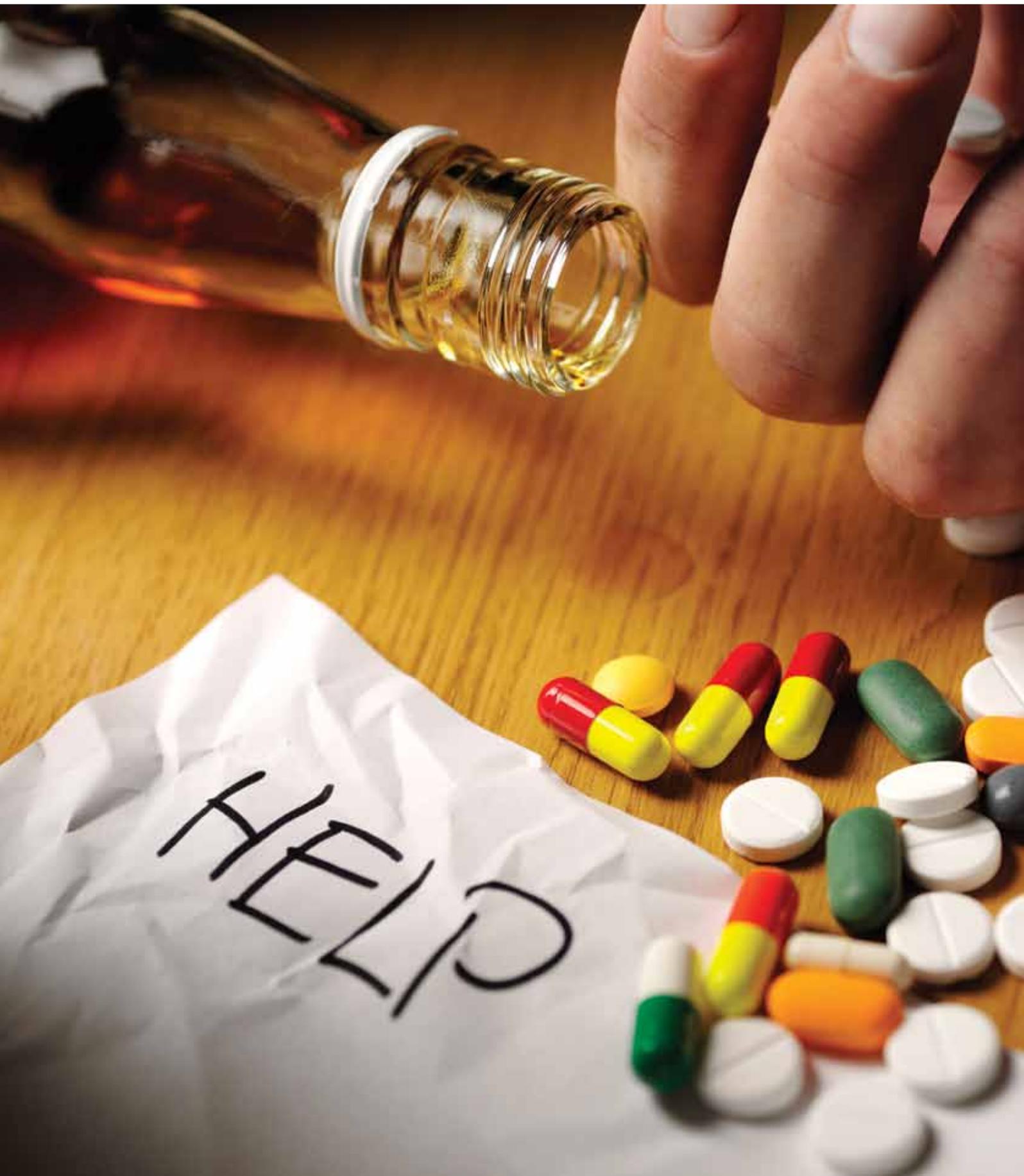
The majority of teenagers experiment with drugs or alcohol in high school. Unfortunately, for some of those teenagers, experimentation crosses the line to a substance use disorder that requires some sort of professional help.

How can parents tell? “The classic things we look for are changes in behavior,” says Dr. Joseph Shrand, medical director of CASTLE, an intervention unit for teenagers at the High Point Treatment Center in Brockton, Mass. That includes changes in sleep habits, energy levels, personal hygiene, and mood. Dropping grades, new friends, and a loss of appetite are also cause for serious concern.

Parents may also notice telltale signs associated with certain drugs. “If your teenager has bloodshot eyes—and you find Visine lying around—they may be smoking weed,” explains Shrand. “Stimulants like cocaine will make them hyperactive, while opioids—heroin and prescription painkillers—will make them lethargic.”

If you’re noticing these sorts of changes, talk to your teenager. If your teenager admits to a problem—or if he doesn’t, but the negative changes and substance use persist—it may be time to take action.

That does not mean parents should pick up the phone and call the nearest adolescent substance abuse treatment center, stress the experts.



Rather, start by getting your teenager assessed by an independent mental health professional who has experience working with adolescents with substance abuse issues.

“Ideally, you want someone who does not have a vested interest in admitting your teen to a treatment program,” recommends Anne M. Fletcher, M.S., R.D., and author of *Inside Rehab: The Surprising Truth About Addiction Treatment—and How to Get Help That Works*

Work your network. Ask friends and family. Use the Internet. Consult with medical professionals whom your teenager sees regularly. For example, if your child is diagnosed with ADHD, talk to that specialist. Your pediatrician may also be able to help with a referral, though this is not an area in which many pediatricians are trained.

Above all, ask questions, including: “What is your experience with substance problems? What is your experience with teens? How do you assess this?” suggests Fletcher.

Understand your options. The assessment will help determine which substances your teenager is using and how much, as well as—and this is key—any underlying mental health or other issues (including in the family) that may be contributing to the problem. It should also recommend a course of action for your teenager.

Fletcher says that many experts recommend a “stepped approach.”

“You want to increase the intensity of the care, as the intensity of the problem increases,” she explains. “You don’t start out with the most intensive treatment first.”

Indeed, for many teenagers, seeing a mental health professional with substance misuse expertise in the community on a regular basis is enough to get them through this stage.

For teenagers with more serious, ongoing problems, enrollment in a formal treatment program may be necessary. However, even here there are choices to be made: outpatient, inpatient, or some combination of both.

Within the stepped approach, an outpatient program is an appropriate place to start for most teenagers (and adults), says Fletcher.

“The research shows in adults that residential treatment is no more effective than outpatient treatment,” she explains, adding that there has been little research in teens.

Here’s just some of what parents should look for in any treatment program:

It’s comprehensive. You want to treat the substance problem, but you also want to make sure you’re tackling any underlying problems—such as mental health issues—that are contributing to the problem. “You want to find out if the substance abuse is secondary to something else—like depression, trauma, anxiety—which is leading your teenager to self-medicate,” explains CASTLE’s Shrand.

It’s based on science. Make sure the program is run by qualified, licensed

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medical professionals—doctors, psychiatrists, psychologists, etc.—and offers a treatment plan that is grounded in the latest evidence-based substance use disorder research.

“You want a program that really understands state of the art neuroscience about the adolescent brain,” adds Shrand.

Beware of programs that aggressively tout non-traditional therapies, like Reiki, yoga, acupuncture, or even animal therapy. While alternative therapies can improve your teenager’s physical health—or provide emotional comfort—there’s no evidence that they are effective in treating substance abuse problems on their own. Parents should be sure they’re selecting treatments that have proven track records.

No tough love. Shrand also recommends parents steer clear of programs with harsh methods. “No programs where they try to scare you out of using drugs and alcohol.” These can include wilderness programs, “emotional-

growth boarding schools,” and other boot-camp style approaches. The bottom line: they don’t work.

“Confrontational approaches have not been shown to be effective and certainly not with adolescents,” adds Fletcher.

A family affair. While parents are not to blame for their teenager’s addiction, they should still be prepared to play a role in the treatment. “The family component of a treatment program is an integral part of a teen’s recovery,” explains Fletcher. “So, make sure it includes a significant family therapy commitment.”

Quality. It’s important to make sure treatment programs are licensed and accredited by the state in which they operate.

Use the Internet to research facilities you’re considering. Look for recommendations on the (many) questions you should ask before checking your teenager in (Fletcher’s *Inside*

Rehab has resources on this). Also call the Better Business Bureau. Any negative report should be a major red flag.

What happens after. “Find out what supports are put in place to help your teenager stay sober,” says Shrand. That can include therapy, support groups, and other services that help your teenager readjust to life without drugs or alcohol.

For more information, check out our article at bit.ly/YT-parenthelp to hear what experts recommend about parenting a teenager who’s dealing with substance use disorder.

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Frances E. Jensen, MD, is Professor and Chair of the Department of Neurology at the Perelman School of Medicine at the University of Pennsylvania.

ASK THE DOCTOR

Understanding the Teenage Brain

When her sons entered adolescence, Dr. Frances Jensen, a neuroscientist, couldn't help but wonder what was going on inside their heads. *Your Teen* talks with the author of *The Teenage Brain: A Neuroscientist's Survival Guide to Raising Adolescents and Young Adults*.

Why a book about the teenage brain?

I am a neuroscientist and I do research on brain development. I also have two sons and when they morphed into adolescents, I thought: "What is going on?" I really wanted to understand my sons and not alienate them. I'm also naturally curious and being in the field, I tried to turn what could have been anger and frustration into curiosity. This was in the mid-2000s, when a lot of research on adolescent brain development was breaking. I found it fascinating, especially the science about

evidence of better synaptic plasticity in the teenage brain.

What's synaptic plasticity?

When you learn, you are using the same pathway over and over again in your brain. As a result, something kind of magical happens, which is that this process triggers the building of a synapse. That's where two brain cells connect. All the proteins that are required to build these synapses are actually programmed at higher levels in children and teenagers, which is why teenagers can learn so well.

So, what should I do if my adolescent is struggling in math?

Don't ignore it. Adolescents can improve skills tremendously. Their synaptic plasticity is higher. They learn at higher rates. This is a *carpe diem* time of life. It's the best time to correct reading problems, to improve in math, or whatever it is. As adults, we have to put much more effort into our learning. Teenagers need to know that they are coming out of this golden period. Their IQ can change. It can go up, but it can also go down. We all thought IQ stayed the same,

but that's not true and that's great news. Parents should be working on that. In elementary school, parents are very involved, and then in middle school, we decide you're a scholar or you're not. That's not right. It can change.

Teenagers don't have fully mature brains?

No, they don't. A lot of people believe that once their children physically mature, there is an adult brain in there. That's not true. The brain is only about 80 percent of the way to adulthood at the end of your teenage

years. Even when you leave college, your brain is not fully mature yet. The brain does not fully mature until around the mid-20s. The frontal and pre-frontal lobes are the last to connect.

What are the frontal and pre-frontal lobes?

These lobes are the seat of executive function, judgment, insight, empathy, impulse control and those abilities are, when you think about it, exactly what are still under development in the teenager. So, while everyone is born with a frontal lobe, it doesn't have these rapid connections going to it for split-second decision-making until about your mid-20s, when the brain finishes developing. That's why teenagers are able to reason through, say, questions on an SAT test, but they're not good at deciding whether or not

to jump into a quarry where there is not enough water.

What other characteristics are the result of a teenager's still-developing brain?

Teenagers have emotional highs and lows. The emotional centers of the brain are connected before the frontal lobes, so the emotional centers are firing on all cylinders with zero dampening from the frontal lobe. Teenagers make a lot of mistakes. They have not done life before. There is a lot of trial and error. There is novelty seeking. There is identity seeking. There is a huge amount of risk-taking. Teenagers are not good at identifying that this cause will lead to this effect. And they are very impressionable, both by good and by bad things. In general, influences have a much more penetrating and permanent effect on them during this period.

Like drugs and alcohol?

Yes, we now understand that addiction is a form of synaptic plasticity. It's a form of learning. Because teenagers have more synapses—and more synaptic plasticity—they need less exposure to drugs and alcohol to have more of an effect on the brain. So binge drinking will cause more brain injury in the teenager than it will in the adult. Teenagers don't require as many exposures to an addictive substance to be addicted. It's basically

the same process as learning a fact; it's just happening in a different part of the brain. A part called the reward system. The science shows that the synapses in the reward system get larger with every exposure to drugs and alcohol, and because teenagers have better synaptic plasticity, their addiction is greater as a result. That is astounding to me, and I made sure my teenagers knew that.

How can understanding brain science help us parent our teenagers?

I think what parents sometimes do with teenagers is that they get frustrated and they throw up their hands. That is the wrong thing to do. I am not advocating for helicopter parenting. What I'm saying is that as much energy as you put into your toddler, it's a different kind of energy, but you may have to put in even more for your teenager. You have to help them plan. You have to help them understand their strengths and weaknesses. A teenager is not going to go up to a counselor and say: "You know, I think I'm having trouble in science." Talk to them about decision-making. As a parent, you have to step up and be their frontal lobe. Give a frontal lobe assist, if you will.

What does brain science say about teenagers never turning off the lights!

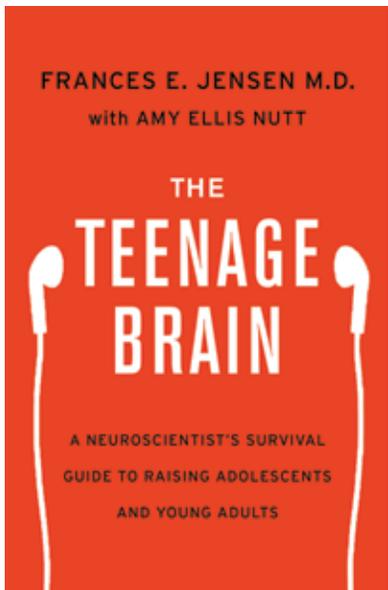
Or why can't they remember

to put the clothes in the hamper? What is that all about? The dishwasher is just next to the sink. Why can't you put the dishes in the sink? Again, their brains are not firing on all cylinders. Their minds are just focused on other things. Teenagers are still at a point where they are very self absorbed, not in a conceited way, but it's a "me, me, me" time. They are struggling to get through their agenda, which they are hyper-focused on. You just have to shake your head and remind them to turn the lights off. Miraculously, when they start getting electric bills, they learn to turn the lights off.

Final thoughts?

What I learned while writing this book is that there is still a lot of myth out there about teenagers. An attitude of, "Oh, they'll be fine. They will bounce back. They will grow out of it." Well, teenagers do grow out of it, but I felt we were dismissing what they were doing during the teenage years. It's an incredibly valuable and precious time. It's a time you can still really scaffold your brain for your future life. I think parents need to know that. I think teenagers need to know that. You need to mind your brain. You get one brain.

Read more of our interview with Dr. Jensen, including why sleep is so important for teenagers, at bit.ly.com/YT-teenagebrain.



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Gap Year



Taking a year off before college is a growing trend

By Mimi Roberts

Question: Teenagers who say they need a break before going to college should:

- A. Go to college anyway.
- B. Consider a gap year.

The answer is B. But until recently, the gap year has not been particularly popular in the United States, though it's long been a rite of passage for international students.

A gap year is a structured period of time in which a student takes a time-out from standard academics. Typically, teenagers will work, volunteer, or participate in a formal gap-year program.

A recent survey of 280 students, by the authors of a book called *The Gap Year Advantage*, found that academic burn-out and a desire "to find out more about themselves" were the top reasons for taking a gap year. Some just wanted to spend time exploring an interest.

Kari Semel knew she'd take a gap year well before her senior year. "I was a freshman when I decided I wanted to do it," recalls the Cleveland-area resident. After high school graduation, she headed off to Ghana for three months, where she worked in an orphanage.

Meanwhile, students like Semel aren't the only ones in favor of the gap year. Increasingly, colleges are encouraging the experience, in part because of research that finds gap-year students are more successful when they get to campus. For example, an ongoing study at Middlebury College shows that students who take a gap year outperform their peers academically.

That's no surprise to Marie Todd, an admissions counselor with Accepted.com. "It's an opportunity for teenagers to gain focus on their goals, enhance their sense of identity, and renew their energy," she says. Often, that means students head into freshman year with more maturity,

confidence, and even purpose than most teenagers just out of high school.

Angela Blunt hopes that will be the case for her son, who spent his gap year living at home and working part-time at the local library. He'll start college this fall. "School was always a struggle for him, and he never felt successful," she says. "Now, he's so much more confident because he's had such a positive experience. He's also more responsible. He's had another year to grow up."

Still, for many parents, the idea of a gap year is nerve-racking. First, there's the worry that teenagers who take a break from school will be tempted not to return. But about 90 percent of students who take a year off after high school enroll in college the

following fall, according to a study by the Higher Education Research Institute at UCLA. Indeed, most colleges allow students to apply and defer enrollment for one year in order to take a gap year.

That's the approach experts recommend—apply and defer. Otherwise, students who don't apply in advance will have the challenge of staying on top of applications while immersed in their gap year.

So where to start? A gap year can mean traveling abroad, volunteering, taking an internship, or just getting a job at the mall. It can be expensive—some programs can run you up to \$40,000—or it can cost nothing at all. Pre-designed gap year programs tend to be highly structured and can run anywhere from

a month to an entire year. These programs also come with the highest price tags (though many offer financial aid). Students can also elect to work full time for one semester to help pay for a semester-long program later in the year.

Some service organizations, like City Year, subsidize a gap year by providing room and board and even a small stipend.

Planning a gap year takes time, so experts recommend teenagers get going early, ideally junior year. Start your research online or look for a regional gap year fair. Your teenager's college counselor should also be able to help.

"I started with Google," says Semel. "I found out that the organization Camp Counselors USA offered gap year programs, and I found the or-

phanage in Ghana through that website." The cost to Semel: a flight to Africa and about \$200 a month. The orphanage provided room and board.

Like going to college, a gap year will present challenges. That's to be expected—and even desired, says Karin Peeters, a life coach and a former gap year student herself. "There's the practical stuff like finding a place to live or a job, and there are emotional challenges like loneliness or feeling homesick," she says. "But parents should trust in the resilience and resourcefulness of their child. By facing and overcoming these challenges, students develop a confidence they can fall back upon for the rest of their lives." ■



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BFFs forever! Maybe not...

The author of the new book *The Gift of Failure: How the Best Parents Learn to Let Go So Their Children Can Succeed* offers her take on tween friendships

By Jessica Lahey

Middle school is challenging for so many reasons—academics become more difficult, schedules fill up with activities, and, in what might be the most treacherous terrain for kids and parents alike, friendships change.

The peers your tween son or daughter cling to as they enter the middle school building for the first time may look a lot different from the ones they race out with on the other side, and that's to be expected. Friendships change over time, not just because our children evolve, but because the very nature of friendship evolves with them.

Early in childhood, our children's friendships arise out of proximity and habit. We toss our kids into the sandbox with our friends' kids, and this arrangement works for everyone. As kids

get older, however, they begin to build emotional connections with friends based on compatibility. Their shared interests, dreams, and goals begin to edge out mere convenience. When they become tweens, friendships become *much* more complex, and for good reason. Tweens use friendships as a way to try on an identity. Old friends offer sameness and comfort, but the pull of novel ideas of other kids begins to lure them in new directions. Tweens begin to build friendships based on these new priorities. While some priorities, such as social status or fashion choices, may not make much sense to parents, they are just as important to our children's growth as shared history or values.

All too often, the shifting sands of tween friendship result in broken hearts. Tweens feel dumped, shunned, abandoned, and betrayed as

friends move back and forth between comfortable old relationships and exciting new alliances. As any parent knows, our own personal heartache hurts, but the secondhand heartbreak we experience through our children is much more painful, mainly because it's out of our control. The urge to intervene, to save and heal, is powerful, and while meddling around in tween social machinations may make us feel better, we must stay out of it.

Our children's middle school friendships are not about us any more than their choice of what to wear to the middle school dance is about us. The tween years are for trying on fifteen different outfits—the blue shirt with the tan pants, the red skirt with the white top—to see what works best for a changing body, mind, and spirit on a given day.

Tweens move from relationship to relationship, adopting this detail of a friend's personality, discarding that characteristic of another, until they have collected the essential elements of their identity. Some relationships will survive this process, and some will not, but every one is an important phase of the journey. We may not love every outfit our tweens try on, but it's our job to be there when they emerge from the dressing room, when they do a little twirl and wait for us to tell them how grown up they have become.

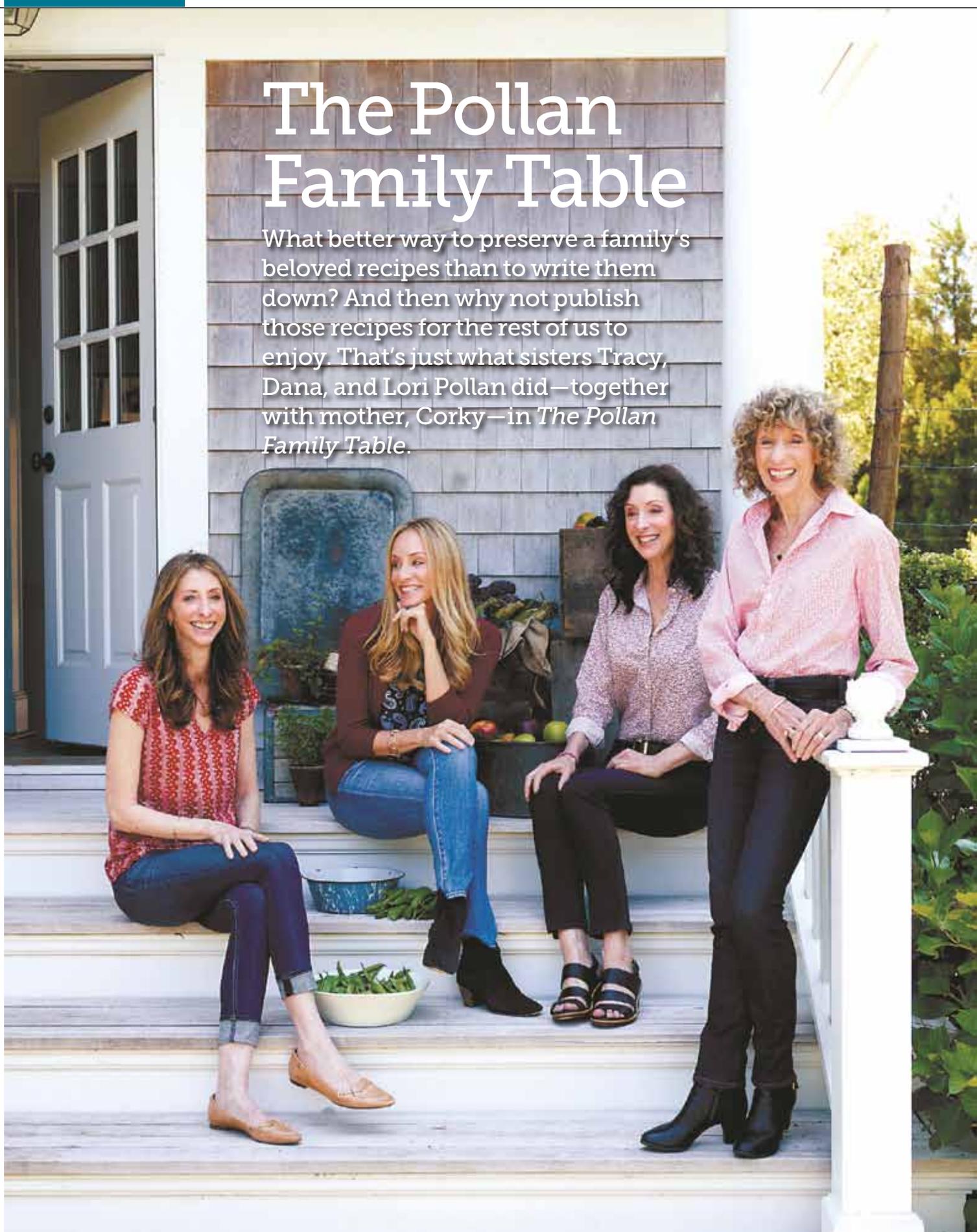
Jessica Lahey is a frequent contributor to The New York Times and The Atlantic and author of The Gift of Failure: How the Best Parents Learn to Let Go So Their Children Can Succeed.



Photo: Beth Segal

The Pollan Family Table

What better way to preserve a family's beloved recipes than to write them down? And then why not publish those recipes for the rest of us to enjoy. That's just what sisters Tracy, Dana, and Lori Pollan did—together with mother, Corky—in *The Pollan Family Table*.



One family. Many food writers, including your brother, Michael Pollan. How did that happen?

Dana: Cooking was important to our mother, Corky. I'd say six nights a week we sat down for a family meal that she prepared. She was a very creative cook and had such an appreciation for good food that I think eventually it rubbed off on all of us. Corky was also working long hours, and she would often call us and say, "Can you put water on the stove? I'm going to make pasta." Or, "Can you start dinner for me?" That was great because it got us all in the kitchen at an early age.

We'd love some tips for getting dinner on the table quickly.

Lori: The planning part is so key, especially today. If you can plot out two to four days of the week and buy those items over the weekend, it's much easier. It's also great to have a couple of go-to recipes, which you feel comfortable making. Try to have the ingredients for those in the house.

What do teenagers like to eat?

Corky: Soup. And there is nothing wrong with having soup for dinner with a salad and a great bread on the side. Often people don't think of that, but a vegetable-loaded soup is so healthy. You can make that in quantities and have that for a couple of meals. You can always double a recipe to make it last for more than one meal. Teens love chicken dishes, chili, roasted vegetables. You can

do fun things, too, like serve breakfast for dinner.

What else?

Dana: What our teenagers and their friends love is pasta. There's a recipe in the book called "Creamy Spinach Pasta Alfredo." One reason they love it is that there is a little bit of cream in there, but it's not a lot. It's a light Alfredo sauce.

Tracy: It's an all-in-one dish and all you need is a salad to go with it. We also have an "Orecchiette with Broccoli and Sun Dried Tomatoes" (available at bit.ly/YTpollan-recipe). We love combining our vegetables with our pasta. It makes cooking so much easier.

How do you prevent your teens from ruining their dinner with snacks?

Lori: I try to have some cut up vegetables, like carrots and red peppers, or fruit when they walk in the door. Or hummus and you can crisp up pita bread (spray a little olive oil and salt on it and crisp it up in the oven). If I have something like that, they might hold off on eating the junk on the way home. They do get the message: Don't fill up on the junk because something good is waiting for you.

Tell us about *The Pollan Family Table*.

Lori: It started because my sisters and I would often ask, "What are you making for dinner tonight?" Or we'd call each other and say, "Oh, I made this great dinner." But often we'd forget all the things we'd made. It

would just disappear out of our minds. We thought, "Wouldn't it be great to have a book with our favorite dinner recipes?"

Dana: We really wanted to keep in mind that as a busy parent, you don't have a ton of time in the kitchen. So we were interested in using recipes that take an hour or less and that use ingredients you can buy at the grocery store. Simple and straightforward recipes that anyone can follow, whether you're starting out or an experienced cook.

What's been the value of family dinner for you?

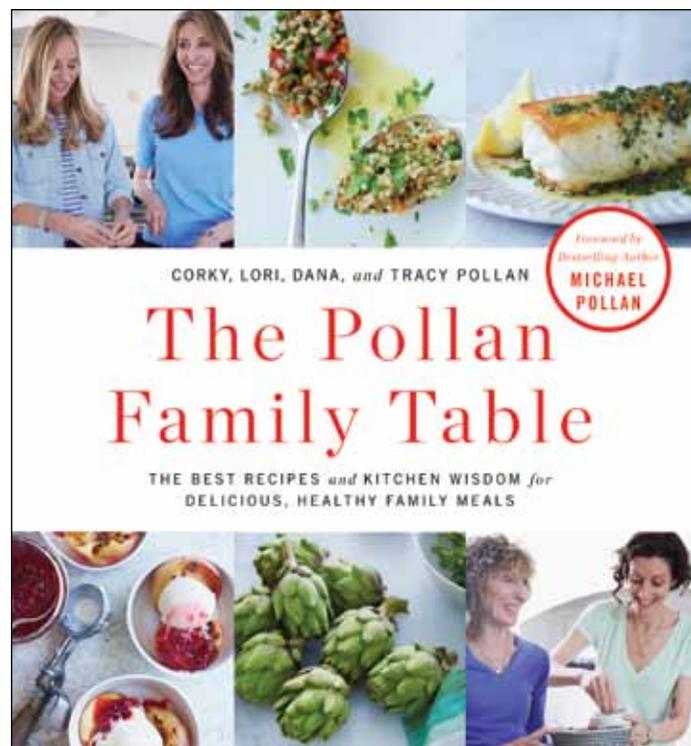
Tracy: The kids are so busy and pulled in so many directions, so this is a time we get to be together as a family. You hear their stories. You hear about their friends. If we didn't sit down for dinner, there would be times

when we would barely even get to talk to them.

How do you recommend teaching teenagers to cook?

Corky: Get them involved in the planning. If you're making plans for the week say, "What should I make tomorrow night?" You can also get your kids started in doing some of the preparation for a meal. They can make a salad or peel something or start the water for pasta. Everyone can also have their own specialty.

Lori: We teach teenagers how to drive, how to open a bank account, and how to register to vote, but people don't often realize that you also need to teach them to cook. They love it. They feel very accomplished and very much like they are in control of their lives. ■



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How Do You Help Teens Get Enough Sleep?

Start when they're tweens

By Lisa Damour

Photo: Beth Segal

Here's the bad news: teenagers need nine hours of sleep a night, but almost half get fewer than seven. Here's the better news: parents can help their teenagers get enough sleep (most of the time), but it means putting rules in place during the tween years.

Sleep is a powerful glue that holds each and every one of us together, and well-rested teens and tweens think smarter, learn faster, and remember more than their drowsy classmates. Sleep also lowers stress, boosts mood, improves communication skills, enhances health, and reduces injuries and accidents. And, of course, getting enough sleep will give your teen the en-

ergy she needs to get through her demanding days.

How do you get there? Start by making the ten hours of sleep needed by tweens non-negotiable. When your fifth grader asks if he can try out for the science Olympiad, stay on the hockey team, and join a youth group, consider saying, "Here's the deal: Until you're thirteen, I get 10 ½ hours of your day. Ten of those hours are for sleep and the half hour is for dinner and chores. That leaves you with 13 ½ hours. You can take on new activities if you can finish your homework and get to bed on time. If you can't, we'll reconsider your extracurriculars." Feel free to add, "When you're 13, you get one more waking hour, but I still

get nine hours for sleep."

The tween years are also prime time for establishing good sleep hygiene habits. Psychologists use this off-putting term to refer to the routines that support sleep. For example, we know that it's best to go to bed and wake up at consistent hours in a bedroom that is cool, dark, and quiet. And what's the number one threat to good sleep hygiene for teenagers? You guessed it: digital devices. The light they emit suppresses key sleep hormones, and, when used in the bedroom, technology disrupts the critical connection our bodies make between being in bed and falling asleep.

When your sixth grader lobbies for a phone of her own, use her burning need

to text with her friends to lay down rules that will support her sleep: all technology stays out of her bed (better yet, her bedroom), shuts down an hour before bedtime, and charges where it won't bother her at night. If she balks at these rules, let her know that you're holding yourself to the same standards; they are as necessary for adults as they are for tweens and teens.

Work to get good habits in place while you still have a tween, because the sleep deck is stacked against teenagers. A biological phenomenon known as sleep phase delay causes adolescents to want to stay up longer and sleep in later. And, in a diabolical twist, the school start times in most communities run against kids' natural sleep patterns. Most kindergarteners get sleepy early and are up hours before the school day begins, while most teenagers can burn the midnight oil but have to drag themselves out of bed

to make it to school on time.

If your teen didn't get good sleep habits in place before adolescence and is suffering now, it's not too late to help her make changes. Teenagers, especially tired ones, can be open to guidance on how to adjust their habits to improve sleep. Don't take a judgmental tone when offering your advice (nothing turns teens off faster), just focus on the biological facts about sleep that apply to everyone.

With their busy schedules and heavy

homework loads, getting the recommended nine hours of sleep is an uphill battle for most teenagers. What's the best way to win an uphill battle? Get the best possible habits in place before it even begins.

*Lisa Damour is a psychologist and the director of Laurel School's Center for Research on Girls. Her forthcoming book, *Untangled: Guiding Teenage Girls Through the Seven Transitions into Adulthood*, will be published by Ballantine Books, a division of Random House, in February 2016.*



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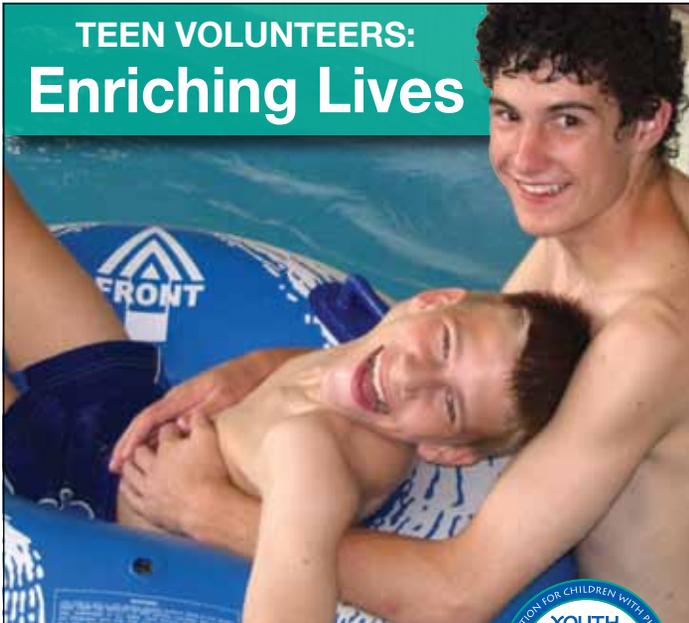
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Letter to My Daughter

By Jeanette Durante

// I love you. You are perfect.” Being the mother of a teenage daughter, I say these words all the time. They are a clumsily expressed sentiment intended to tell her that I love her exactly how she is, that I do not see flaws, that in my eyes, she is a da Vinci, a Mozart...quite simply, a masterpiece. But recently I witnessed her in a moment of genuine self-loathing and realized that my expression of love had become a burden.

She came to me in tears, and said, “I’m not who you think I am. You think I’m perfect, but I’m not. You don’t know the things in my head or the things I sometimes do.” Of course I was alarmed—what monstrous things was she doing?—but it turned out the “things in her head” were simple moments of pettiness that we are all guilty of. The “things she sometimes does” were minor interactions with other children when she was probably not her best version of herself. But in her mind, these moments of humanity had become bigger than they were.

What really worried me though was that she thought my love was contingent on her perfection. That she had to be perfect to be perfect to me.

So this is my letter, to all daughters:

I love you. You are not perfect.

You will hurt people. You will make mistakes. You will make them again. You will hurt someone you love badly. You will walk past a person in need and pretend you didn't see them. You will neglect loved ones. You will refuse to say sorry even though you are in the wrong. You will say something spiteful. You will neglect a pet. You will be rude to someone serving you. You will lie. You will lose your temper with those who do not deserve it. You will fail. You will fail badly. You will place blame on someone else for something you did. You will choose to do something fun

over something responsible. You will fall for the wrong guy. You will break the heart of a good guy. You will resent your own child. You will hate me, your mother, when I am just trying to help you.

But...

You will help a stranger. You will make someone belly laugh right at a time when they really need it. You will help a friend heal from the ache of a broken heart. You will smile at a stranger whose life is in tatters. You will offer your seat to someone who looks weary. You will hold the hand of a small child who is lost. You will win. You will win

gracefully. You will listen. You will take the blame for someone who needs you to. You will weep tears for a stranger. You will fight an injustice. You will choose to be responsible when the choice is not easy. You will tell someone that everything is going to be okay when you know it isn't, and hold them when it's not. You will catch someone when they fall. You will pretend you did not see them stumble. You will make heartbreaking choices for pets. You will hold them as they die. You will say sorry even when you were not wrong. You will let someone you love go free. You will accept them back when they are ready. You will forgive. You

will love your child in a way that leaves you breathless. You will love me—your mother—even when I behave badly because I too, am not perfect.

Your life will be full of moments of imperfection; moments of humanity. Moments where you do not do the right thing, say the right thing, think the right thing. But you will bring joy to those around you in much more abundance than you will bring them hurt. Because perfection and imperfection are melded together to make you just exactly what you are supposed to be: perfectly imperfect.

Love, Mom

Jeanette Durante is a slightly bewildered, frequently amused and always terrified mother of a teenage daughter. Her second (and paid!) job is as a social researcher.

Must it always be about them? All About Me is a chance to talk about something other than your teen—finally.

Farewell, Old Friend

By Stephanie Schaeffer Silverman

Someone we loved, who loved all of us right back, was taken away in the middle of the night. We didn't see her often, but she played an important role in the family.

Last week we said goodbye to the Tooth Fairy after a good 11-year run.

It was bound to happen, but it didn't play out at all in the way I had expected. I thought one of our two sons who LOVE to razz their little sister would be the spoiler. I didn't anticipate that the spoiler would be my husband.

The questions had been building for some time as our daughter matured. Our 12-year-old had been leaving notes for the Tooth Fairy for years. What do you look like? How many teeth do you collect each night? What do you DO with all of the teeth? What do you do in your free time? What color are your wings? Can you fly? Do you have a best friend? And, my favorite line, when we forgot to "visit": Why couldn't you come yesterday? (The Tooth Fairy had to refrain from saying: Because I was coaching five baseball games and fell asleep on the couch, again). And the ever-favorite last line of each note: "Please enjoy my teeth." Yuck.

And, with each handwritten note, the Tooth Fairy responded with a typed note, answering all questions posed by this very curious girl:



Why didn't you come last night? I couldn't get there because the weather was cold and my wings don't do well in that weather.

How old are you? I'm somewhere between Dumbledore and Yoda.

Where do you get all of the money? The money I give is minted by other fairies at a special factory.

What do you do in your free time? In my free time I like to read, fly among the stars, and dream. I have quite an imagination (duh) and imagination can take you anywhere.

Over the years, the questions got longer, more specific and then, the dagger to my heart:

Are you REALLY the Tooth Fairy, or is it just everyone's moms and dads? OUCH. The end was clearly in sight. Sniff.

But she continued to believe ("You have to believe to receive" was the mantra), and we continued to let her. Until last week.

****SPOILER ALERT****

Once again, Tooth Fairy forgot to visit to collect the newly pulled teeth. But there was a chance to rectify the situation. With my daughter in the bathroom early the next morning, Tooth Fairy seized the moment and snuck

into her room. Next I heard the bathroom door open and her feet shuffling along the hallway to her room. This time I wished the answer to the "Can you fly?" question was a hearty yes.

They collided at the bedroom door, destined to come face to face, childhood on one side of the door, adulthood on the other.

And then I heard them BOTH start to laugh—that big, belly laughter that completely makes my heart swell. What a moment.

A few minutes later she appeared in my room. "Wait a minute—so DAD wrote ALL of those notes back to me?" She was incredulous as she processed this piece of the story.

"Yep—every one of them." I watched that settle in.

"So no more money for me?"

"Nope."

"Well, that stinks. Why did you tell me?" Hair flip, and saunter out of the room.

And like that, she went from girl to pre-teen.

I wonder if I can get money for pulling my hair out these next few years... ■



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—Ricardo Marrero, LCCC student

Did you know gratitude is good for your teenager?



It's true. Studies show that grateful teenagers are more likely to be **happy**, have more **friends**, and get **better grades**.

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Instead, experts recommend parents encourage teenagers to express gratitude in ways they're comfortable with.

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So, we wondered: would teenagers actually enjoy using ThankList. We asked a few:

*"It's so simple to use," says **Katie Coyle**, who'll be a senior in high school this year. "There are three easy steps: write a message, upload an optional photo, and publish! Anyone can do it and the reward is huge. My friend, Jenny, won't stop talking about the one I sent her."*

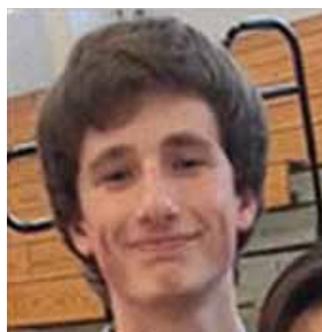
*"I really like that I can use ThankList on my phone," adds newly-minted high school graduate **Zach Silverman**. "I sent one to my mom and I could tell it made her day."*

Check it out at thanklist.com.
Because gratitude is contagious.



Thank you, Mom for always believing in me and teaching me the true meaning of love.

— Fred Goodall



Thank you, Adam Anshan, for teaching me the importance of brotherhood. You taught me how to look out for my best friends.

— Zach Silverman



Thank you, Callie Taylor for making sure that the youth of Cleveland do not become another statistic.

— Tiara Jea'nae



Thank you, Julia for being you every day, and always being there for me no matter what. I value our friendship so much.

— Brooke Siegler



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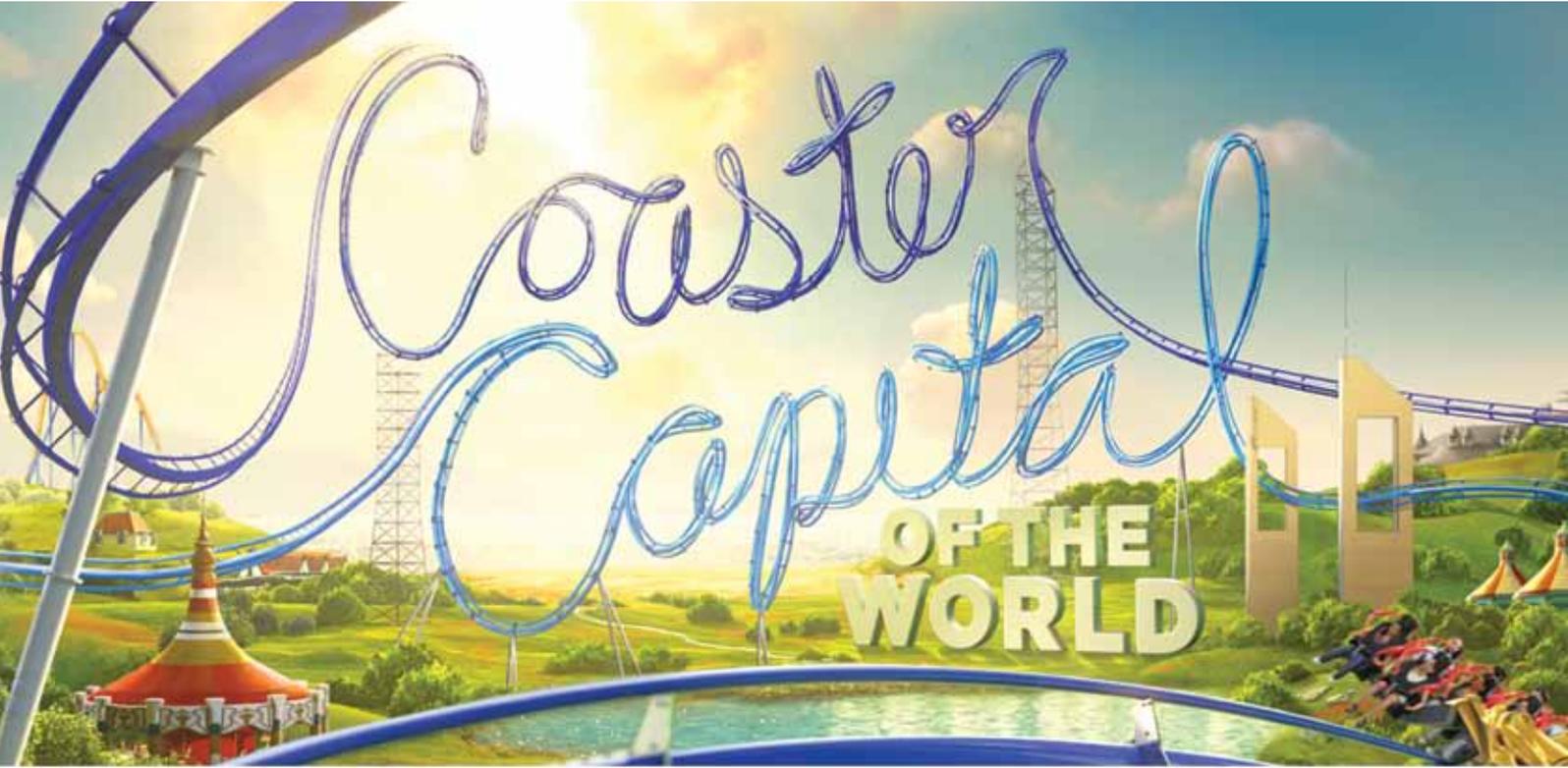
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