

## **APPENDIX A:**

# **How to Raise Happy Teens—A Resource for Parents and Caregivers**

Hopefully you have parents/guardians/adult helpers who are there for you. Maybe they even bought you this book. Now it is time for them to get some help to support you.

Cut these pages out, staple them, and give them to your parents, guardians, or the adult helper of your choosing.

(Yes, it is also okay for you to read them!)



Dear Love Giver,

Being a parent, caregiver, teacher, guardian, grandparent, counselor of Gen Z teens is not for the faint of heart. It is HARD. I know you are doing everything you can. I want you to know that IT IS MAKING A DIFFERENCE. If you don't agree, that is probably because you're being too hard on yourself and excusing away your amazing-ness. "What? It's no big deal! It's what anyone would do." No, it's a remarkable feat and it shows how skilled you are. You also might not see the progress because most changes your kids make are subtle. Individuating (becoming a human adult) is a one-step-forward-three-steps-back kind of deal. 🙄 I wish it weren't so.

I have three kids. My youngest is fifteen as I write this. I get it. You'd love your independent, happy butterfly to emerge from the cocoon and fly around, successful and surrounded by positive friends and family (and . . . you also want them to appreciate everything you did to get them there). But it takes a while to eat enough leaves, deal with body changes, figure out what they want, weave a chrysalis, and transform inside it. And, in our modern world, there is a lot to waylay them from the process.

By the time they are in their twenties, when they finally are mature enough to realize what you've done for them, you might have more scars than they do!

Kids need to make mistakes and encounter disappointments so they can learn how to survive in this crazy world. It breaks your heart to see them struggle, but that's part of their journey. It's not your job to fix it or make it perfect for them. But you do have an important job. To be present so they don't feel alone in the world. To reflect to them their implicit worth. To be their guide and cheerleader.

Here are the four things kids need from their parents.



### **✂ Basic needs**

Having food, clothes, shelter, and safety will give kids the security to learn how to be in the world. There is a gradual weaning off process of providing basic needs to kids as they grow, when they start practicing fulfilling their own needs and making their own decisions. At first, they'll make small decisions with your guidance, then they'll start to make bigger and bigger decisions. Some of these will turn your hair grey, since learning independence comes with risks and rebellion. 😞 I'm sorry.

### **✂ Unconditional love**

Families are the first place where kids feel a sense of belonging and worth. Everyone needs this for emotional wellness! Having unconditional love is how kids learn self-acceptance and self-forgiveness. When they make mistakes, they need a place to come back to, where loved ones won't define them by that mistake.

### **✂ Opportunities to learn**

Kids are sponges. They are taking in everything around them. As parents, one of our biggest jobs is surrounding them with opportunities to learn. They will learn what they enjoy, how to be kind to people, how to take care of themselves, how to do what they don't like to do, how to eat well, when to ask for help, how to act justly, how to read the world, and more. They are always watching 😊, so we need to be models of how we want them to be.

### **✂ To notice their uniqueness**

As kids grow personalities, it is important to point out their unique skills and values. You noticing their abilities teaches them how to see themselves. This is how they'll step into their personal agency. It's how they build trust and confidence in themselves. You are showing them their empowerment in a seemingly powerless world. This is the best thing you can do to help them live up to their potential.

When kids have anxiety and depression, they first and foremost want to feel understood. These are what kids with anxiety want you to know.

### **How hard they are trying**

Acknowledge how hard it is to just get through the day. When they feel misunderstood about this, they will defend their limitations, which increases how bad they feel. But if they are recognized for their efforts, they will have more access to those efforts.

### **What helps them**

Plan out with your teen a list of what helps them in different scenarios, so you have a toolbox to refer to. Anxiety makes people want to fight with each other, and while you probably can't avoid this altogether, you can prevent some of it by working this out ahead.

### **What triggers them**

When no one knows how you are feeling, it's awful. Sometimes kids need to talk out their problems to see them from different angles. If you know the lies that anxiety tells your teen, you can help them realize they are not true. Teaming up on this is invaluable, because anxiety can be pretty persistent, especially when they are alone.

### **That distraction helps**

One of the greatest skills humans have is to distract themselves. It is easiest to do this when you are not alone. Tell stories, run errands, start a project, or watch funny videos together! Distracting them when they need it is a necessary and rewarding role for you to play; if not, they can get stuck in their own powerlessness. Don't underestimate the power of distraction!

### To remind them that it is temporary

One of the first things I convey in this book is that people get through anxiety faster when they *believe that they can*. You have a big influence over how they think about anxiety. If you think it is “something they will have to manage their whole life,” they will think that, too, and they will keep it. Anxiety is temporary, but it will last if you don’t believe that. Even in heightened anxiety, remembering that it will pass makes it less scary and deflates it. Remind your teen, “This will go away,” and tell them that you will not leave them here. Assure them that you will figure this out together. There are so many things you can do to feel better, and you will just try one at a time until it is gone.

Raising kids brings up a lot of your own shizzle. Don’t delay addressing this. Getting yourself together is the best thing you can do to help them.

It would be great if you can read this book; however, your kid’s copy may not be available. (They may be writing their private thoughts in there.) Get yourself a Kindle version and read along so you are equipped to be their biggest guide and cheerleader. It will help you understand what they are going through, and how to think and talk about anxiety so you can lift them out of it *faster*.

When your teen is struggling, it evokes your own feelings of powerlessness. I get it. That’s why I have a page of resources just for you. They are shots in the arm to fortify you to keep up the hard work! You’ll find videos, audios, and articles here: [jodiaman.com/conscious-parenting](http://jodiaman.com/conscious-parenting).

- ✂ My TEDxWilmington Talk on why we have an anxiety epidemic
- ✂ Developing your parental intuition to build trust in yourself
- ✂ How to know when to seek professional help and understanding the options
- ✂ What goes in deciding to medicate your teens



- ✂ Natural ways to improve mental health
- ✂ How to keep lines of communication open
- ✂ How to address about suicidality and self-harm behaviors
- ✂ How to get your kids off their phones
- ✂ How to help your kids get rid of anxiety
- ✂ Everything you need to know about raising Gen Z
- ✂ How to Help Your Kids with Anxiety Masterclass
- ✂ How to prevent giving your kids “your baggage”
- ✂ Links to my favorite parenting resources

And here is the book resource page for teens: [jodiaman.com/ditchinganxiety](http://jodiaman.com/ditchinganxiety).

From there, you can search my YouTube videos that expose the major problems that attack our emotional wellness. I will show you how to navigate around them and get through them with your sanity intact, empowered to take charge of your life! You need to maintain your emotional wellness while you raise the future adults of this world.

We parents have to stick together. Sometimes it feels like we are feeling our way through the dark with Gen Z, because this is unprecedented territory. We are more hands-on than our parents were, yet anxiety and depression keep rising steadily, as if our efforts don't make a difference. We worry that our kids are drowning and ill-equipped to handle life.

Humans are highly adjustable, and when given challenges, they will rise to them. It's easier, of course, when they believe that they can. Enter, you.

No matter how hopeless they become, you can maintain the confidence that they CAN do this, and it will rub off on them. Reflect back to them the different skills they have as evidence that they can get through whatever is happening today. This belief in them will be contagious, and they will start to take it on.

You are making a difference. You strongly influence the tools that they have to cope with life. Just hold signs along their route

to guide them, be available for hugs when they need you, and cheer from the sidelines when they don't. Always radiate back to them the good they have in them until they see it, too.

However heartbroken you are to see your kid suffering, and however bleak it seems to be because you've tried everything, don't fear. There is hope. Things don't stay the same. They always change. You have the power to change them for the better, together.

Good luck, and let me know what else I can do for you.

Peace,  
Jodi

Come hang out with me!  
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As a psychotherapist for over 20 years, Jodi shows people how to create practical miracles even in the most difficult times. As an inspirational speaker, she teaches Generation Z, their parents, and helps how to find their Diamond Confidence so they feel worthy, empowered and in control. In her online videos, she gives audiences all over the world usable tools to get clarity, push past fear, and develop their intuition. Because Jodi clawed her way out of her own emotional turmoil, she totally gets it. As a mom of teens, she double-dog gets it. Through her TEDxWilmington talk, “Calm Anxious Kids,” and her bestselling book, *You 1, Anxiety 0*, Jodi is changing the way we understand the current mental health crisis. She generates her own daily happiness through mindfulness, family time, and walking in the woods with her fur-baby, Winston.