

*TOP 10 Resources  
To Support and Inspire Teens*



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## *TOP 10 Resources To Support and Inspire Teens*

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## ***TOP 10 Resources To Support and Inspire Teens***

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I've been working with teens for the better part of my professional career. This eBook contains ten tips, tools, resources and perspectives to help you navigate through the teen years and understand, connect and communicate with the teens in your life, and inspire them to be the best they can be.

My area of specialty is teen sexuality. The truth is I talk about sexuality a lot. But my work is not all about sex ... not even close! Sexuality is often the topic that gets me in front of groups of teens and provides the opportunity to connect with them where they're at. Once I'm inside that is where the real magic happens and real progress is made.

The reality is I spend the majority of my time building rapport with teens, helping them develop effective communication skills, coaching them on self esteem and self confidence. I support them in building healthy relationships and friendships as well as helping them create effective support systems that will support them in making healthy decisions as they navigate through adolescence and plan for their future.

The program I've been running for the past 15 years consistently maintains one of the very lowest teen pregnancy rates in the United States. I train and work with an amazing group of teen peer educators. We provide puberty education, comprehensive sexuality education and support effective adult-teen communication among teens and young adults while supporting academic and social success and positive self esteem through collaboration with parents and youth serving professionals in school, home and community-based settings.

I consult with school administrators, parents, youth service professionals and community groups to help them develop understand teen brain development as it relates to behavior as well as implement age appropriate, evidence-based curricula and programs to achieve desired results.

I also coach teens, parents and youth serving professionals one on one and in groups. I work from a speaking platform facilitating educational programs and skills development workshops. I am a certified hypnotherapist with a passionate interest in harnessing the power of the subconscious mind, helping people connect with their life purpose and teaching principles to help them create the life they dream about.

Feel free to email me directly at [trisharx@aol.com](mailto:trisharx@aol.com) or visit <http://www.trishajacobson.com> for more information about me, my work and how I may be able to help you further!

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## **1) *What's Up With Developmental Assets?***

The Developmental Assets are 40 common sense, positive experiences and qualities that help to influence the choices young people make and help them become caring, responsible adults.

Studies of more than 2.2 million young people consistently show that the more assets young people have, the less likely they are to engage in a wide range of risk behaviors and the more likely they are to thrive.

Developmental assets are a source of power for all young people, regardless of their age, gender, economic status, family, or race/ethnicity. Assets are better predictors of involvement in risk behavior and thriving than are poverty or being from a single-parent family.

Because of its basis in youth development, resiliency and prevention research and its proven effectiveness, the Developmental Assets framework has become one of the most widely used approaches to positive youth development in the United States.

To get a copy of the 40 Developmental Assets for teens along with useful activities and tools for increasing assets in youth, visit and explore <http://www.search-institute.org/developmental-assets-tools>

Also, check out a fun and easy tool called the [Conversation Generator](#). This handy tool can help you initiate those important conversations with your teen or simply get their feedback and perspective on some of the issues and situations they may be facing.

Check it out at <http://www.search-institute.org/conversation-generator>

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## **2) *Understanding the Teen Brain***

The *Parents' Guide to the Teen Brain* is an excellent primer to help adults understand teen brain development and begin to answer the question adults so often asked about teens, "Why do they act that way?"

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For this Guide as well as lots and lots of resources around teen substance use visit <http://teenbrain.drugfree.org/>

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### **3) Understanding the Function of Behavior**

This is a quick insight that comes directly from my experience working with teens in the classroom, in the clinic, in dropout prevention programs and in the court system ... as well as simply talking with teens about what's behind their behavior.

The simple truth is, behind most teen behavior lies a function of that behavior; a purpose for the behavior, a reason behind the behavior or a way to achieve a particular outcome as a result of the behavior.

Too often adults focus on the particular behavior and lose sight of the function of the behavior. Thus, the consequence given by the adult to correct the behavior often serves the original function of the behavior and inadvertently reinforces the behavior.

Therefore, even though the behavior is addressed, we never get to the real underlying issue.

#### **Example**

A 15 year old girl gets sent to the office from math class every morning for being disruptive in class. Before sending the girl to class, the teacher tries to redirect the student, but the behavior escalates and she has no choice but to send the student out.

The behavior repeats three days in a row. The teacher is a bit confused. The girl is a good math student, but nevertheless sends her to the office as she is disrupting the learning environment.

**The Behavior** = being disruptive

**The Function** = to get out of class

**The Consequence** = time in the office and detention on Day 3

***The Result: The student's mission was accomplished ... simple, fast, easily and consistently ... 3 days in a row!***

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***But the question still remains*** ... what's really going on with this student?

**The Follow-up** = on a hunch, the teacher checks in with the student after Day 3. The student has HUGE attitude, is rude to the teacher and refuses to talk.

The teacher leaves the option open for the student to come see her if she changes her mind.

The student shows up after school with only slightly less attitude. The teacher remains present and patient. Finally the girl begins talking.

She shares that she's been wanting to get out of math class (and all her other classes) because she's being teased by classmates about wearing the same clothes every day.

A couple of open-ended questions asked by the teacher reveal that the student is homeless, hasn't had a shower in 4 days, has no clean clothes and is afraid of what's happening in her family.

A complicated example, but you get the idea.

Keep an open dialogue. Focus on the Function ... not so much the Behavior.

The truth is it's not too hard to figure out. Most of the time, all you have to do is create a private space, disarm all judgment, ask and then wait. Teens may not respond in your time, but if they know you care without judgment, they will more than likely respond in their own time and in their own way.

Patience, perseverance, consistency and flexibility are key. Do your best to not take things personally. Teens don't trust most adults easily. Sometimes, this extends to parents. However, building rapport and trust is really pretty easy if you can be open-minded. Most teens crave connection and caring!

The girl in the example did. And she welcomed the hot shower and fresh change of clothes and the support the teacher was able to connect her with.

Respect gets respect is great foundation to maintain with teens. As is the old adage, don't judge a book by its cover. Once you have rapport, you are on your way to building trust. The rest is easy.

Ask open ended questions ... and then listen with an open mind and without judgment.

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### **4) *Changing Bodies, Changing Lives***

A book that provides a comprehensive and essential road map through the difficult terrain of adolescence, *Changing Bodies, Changing Lives* gives teens a thoughtful, empathetic and personal look at the issues that affect them daily.

This is a great coffee table book for any home where teens live. Don't be surprised if it disappears for awhile. Parents tell me that they've found it under the bed or under the covers in their teen's room. Let it be where it is. And let them know that if they have any questions, you're happy to do your best to answer them.

Also help them identify other adults in their lives that can support them in finding their answers.

Parents need to realize that the majority of teens stop talking to parents about certain topics or censor what they will talk about for fear of consequences or embarrassment. Classroom surveys of thousands of teens in my 8-12<sup>th</sup> grade classrooms consistently reveal that the top three topics that teens either censor or stop talking about are sex, alcohol and drugs. Their top reasons cited by teens are concern that curiosity in these topics may cause parents to think that kids are actually engaging in related behaviors, being grounded from connecting with friends and romantic interests and, finally, some things are just private.

I recommend that all teens have a list of 5 people from 5 places in their lives that they can go to with questions and/or for support. I help them to develop this list and I encourage parents to not only support them in doing this, but to help them as well.

The worst thing you can do is to insist on being their sole support. Trust me ... this will create gaps and stand in their way of getting the information and support they need to make healthy choices in a wide variety of circumstances they may face during their teen years.

Family values are essential ... and it is important for your teen to know where you stand on issues and expectations related to academic performance, sexuality, substance use, etc. However to assume that your teen will adopt your values as their own is a huge mistake.

Sorry ... that is my soap box ... and is based on the work I do every day with teens!

Now back to the book, *Changing Bodies, Changing Lives* ...

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For more information or to order this book, visit  
<http://www.ourbodiesourselves.org/publications/cbcl.asp>

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### **5) Teen Sexuality**

*Did you know?*

For over fifteen years, the *National Campaign to Prevent Teen and Unplanned Pregnancy* has asked teens all over the United States one simple question:

***"If you could give your parents or other important adults advice about how to talk to you and your friends to help avoid pregnancy, what would it be?"***

Teens answered with the following:

*"Show us why teen pregnancy is such a bad idea."*

*"Talk to us honestly about sex, love and relationships"*

*"Telling us not to have sex is not enough ... explain why you feel that way and ask us what we think."*

*"Whether we're having sex or not, we need to be prepared with knowledge about how to avoid pregnancy and sexually transmitted infections"*

*"We really care what you think, even if we don't always act like we do"*

*"Show us what good, responsible relationships look like"*

*"We're as influenced by what you do as by what you say"*

*"Help us understand some of the early warning signs of an unhealthy relationship and how to avoid them."*

*"We hate "The Sex Talk" as much as you do. Instead of "the talk" start talking with us about sex and responsibility when we're young and keep the conversation going as we grow older"*



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*Also, did you know that teens consistently say that their parents have the most influence their decisions about sex, love and relationships?*

*Source: "Ten Tips for Parents to Help Prevent Teen Pregnancy", The National Campaign to Prevent Teen and Unplanned Pregnancy at [www.teenpregnancy.org](http://www.teenpregnancy.org)*

A few great resources for parents and teens alike include:

<http://www.sexetc.org> a website for teens by teens

<http://www.advocatesforyouth.org> for teens, parents (Parents Sex Ed Center) as well as lots of support for professionals and great GLBTQ links.

*Let's Talk About Sex: The Movie* is a great documentary to help adults, schools and communities open up the lines of communication with teens around teen sexuality. Hugh Jackman says, "Whether you have children, teach children or are around children at all ... this movie is a must see." And I would agree! Visit <http://www.letstalkaboutsexthefilm.com/> to learn more about the movie and get some great tips, tools and resources for opening up the dialogue around teen sexuality.

Also, feel free to contact me directly at [trisharx@aol.com](mailto:trisharx@aol.com) to learn more about what we are doing in NH and how I can help you, your school and/or your community reduce teen pregnancy. Our comprehensive community outreach and clinic model has consistently produced one of the lowest teen pregnancy rates in the country. We love what we do, we're great at it and we are happy to share our recipe for success!

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### ***6) The Success Principles for Teens and Adults***

I recently a piloted a new Pathways to Success in Health and Wellness curriculum in middle and high schools and had amazing results! The curriculum is based on Jack Canfield's *Success Principles: How to Get From Where You Are to Where You Want to Be* for both adults and teens. I am working on a funding plan and partnerships to expand it to schools around the country.

This work, by Jack Canfield, has literally transformed my personal life and the professional work I do with teens (and adults). From my perspective, [\*The Success Principles: How to Get From Where You Are to Where You Want to Be\*](#) need to be incorporated into classrooms all across the country.

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That statement is based on my own personal experience with Jack's work as well as feedback I have gotten from a wide range and number of high school students and graduates that have provided me with feedback on the book. I have also incorporated several of his principles into my curriculum and have plans to do more. The results have been great so far.

Teens are pretty critical and they are certainly honest. They were highly critical of the title, cover and format of the book, [\*The Success Principles for Teens\*](#) but they gave a big thumbs up to the quotes, stories and the content! They want more of this kind of stuff in their classrooms as well as in electronic format, of course, so they can download it on their Smartphone and iPods!

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### ***7) The Truth about Peer Influence***

A great article that reinforces what I already know from working with teens and witnessing the power of *positive peer influence*, which is far more prevalent than the more popular, and negative idea of *peer pressure*. And I can't help but notice the impact the media has on our perceptions! If you want to know about teens, ask them! Chances are, if you don't judge them and simply listen, they will tell you!

Check out this article *The Kids Are Truly Right* at:

[http://articles.cnn.com/2011-03-31/opinion/stepp.kids.all.right\\_1\\_teens-lament-students-report-drinking?\\_s=PM:OPINION](http://articles.cnn.com/2011-03-31/opinion/stepp.kids.all.right_1_teens-lament-students-report-drinking?_s=PM:OPINION)

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### ***8) Five Tips for Parents Dealing With Teen Risk Behavior***

This comes from my [\*Transition on Purpose Blog\*](#) and is based on years of experience and conversations with teens. The harsh reality is that in surveys I've conducted in high school classrooms over the past 10 years, 95% of high school teens say that they stop talking to their parents about what's really going on in their head and their lives around three specific topics. The topics are sex, alcohol and drugs.

The communication breakdown lasts for a couple of years, most teens tell me. As teens get older, they get more comfortable with their ideas, thoughts, beliefs and

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choices. They have begun to develop their own value systems and at the same time are well aware that their value systems may not be in line with their family's value system.

Unfortunately the "couple of years" gap in communication usually corresponds to the time many teens begin to experiment with sex, drugs and alcohol.

Trust me ... this is a very dangerous scenario!!!

Teens need accurate, unbiased information and supportive adults to help them sort through the information, thoughts, and emotions and support them in making responsible choices.

Here are [my suggestions](#) on how to help support them through this time period.

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### ***9) Creating Effective Adults-Youth Partnerships***

Once again, *Advocates for Youth* does a great job providing extensive resources for teens, parents and professionals. The link below will connect you to a wealth of information about forming effective adult-youth partnerships. Although the information provided is often focused on sexuality, the principles provided here can be applied to any adult-youth initiative!

<http://www.advocatesforyouth.org/for-professionals/working-with-youth-professionals>

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### ***10) Harnessing the Power of the Subconscious Mind***

Over the years I have done lots and lots of professional development and personal growth work. You can read about my traditional medical background, my personal and professional transition and my most recent work with hypnosis along with my current fascination with the newest research linking science and spirituality on my website.

Recently, I am most fascinated with the power of the subconscious mind and our ability to reframe limiting beliefs and break the repetitive patterns we tend to develop

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growing up and how we can use our knowledge and effective techniques to improve our daily lives and ultimately create the life of our dreams.

I have been incorporating some of this work into classroom presentations using techniques like kinesiology, affirmations and visualization to help demonstrate the powerful effect that energy and limiting beliefs have on our subconscious mind and how things manifest in our conscious reality. This is very powerful stuff and is the foundation of the Law of Attraction that has become mainstream over the past few years.

I'm excited to be exploring this in relation to my work with teens. And the kids in class love it!

For me and for the adults I work with, one of the most easy, fun and effective tools I've used to harness the power of the subconscious mind is Mind Movies. I use [Mind Movies](#) with coaching clients and am exploring its use with teens as part of goal setting and the using the power of visualization.

Mind Movies is a powerful software package that allows you to create a short 2-3 minute movie based on your personal and career goals, while enhancing them with visualization, precision affirmations and inspiring music, all of which have been proven to access the power of the subconscious mind through conscious means. Very, very cool stuff!

I've been using Mind Movies for several years now and the results have been phenomenal!

To check into the science behind Mind Movies, create one of your own and help your teen create theirs, click [here](#).

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Clearly, there are lots more tools and techniques we can use to identify, address and reprogram the limiting beliefs that limit us and block us from reaching our goals. One of my favorites that I use myself as well as with clients is hypnosis. Hypnosis is a powerful tool to help reframe thought patterns and change behavior patterns. Used in combination with coaching, hypnosis can provide teen, young adult and adult clients with clarity and while helping them create new habits to support maximum growth.

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Thank you for purchasing my *Transition on Purpose Top 10 Resources to Support and Inspire Teens*. Feel free to contact me at in any of the following ways if I can be of assistance to you, your teen or young adult, your group or your organization.

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