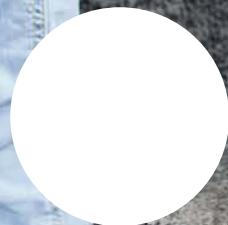
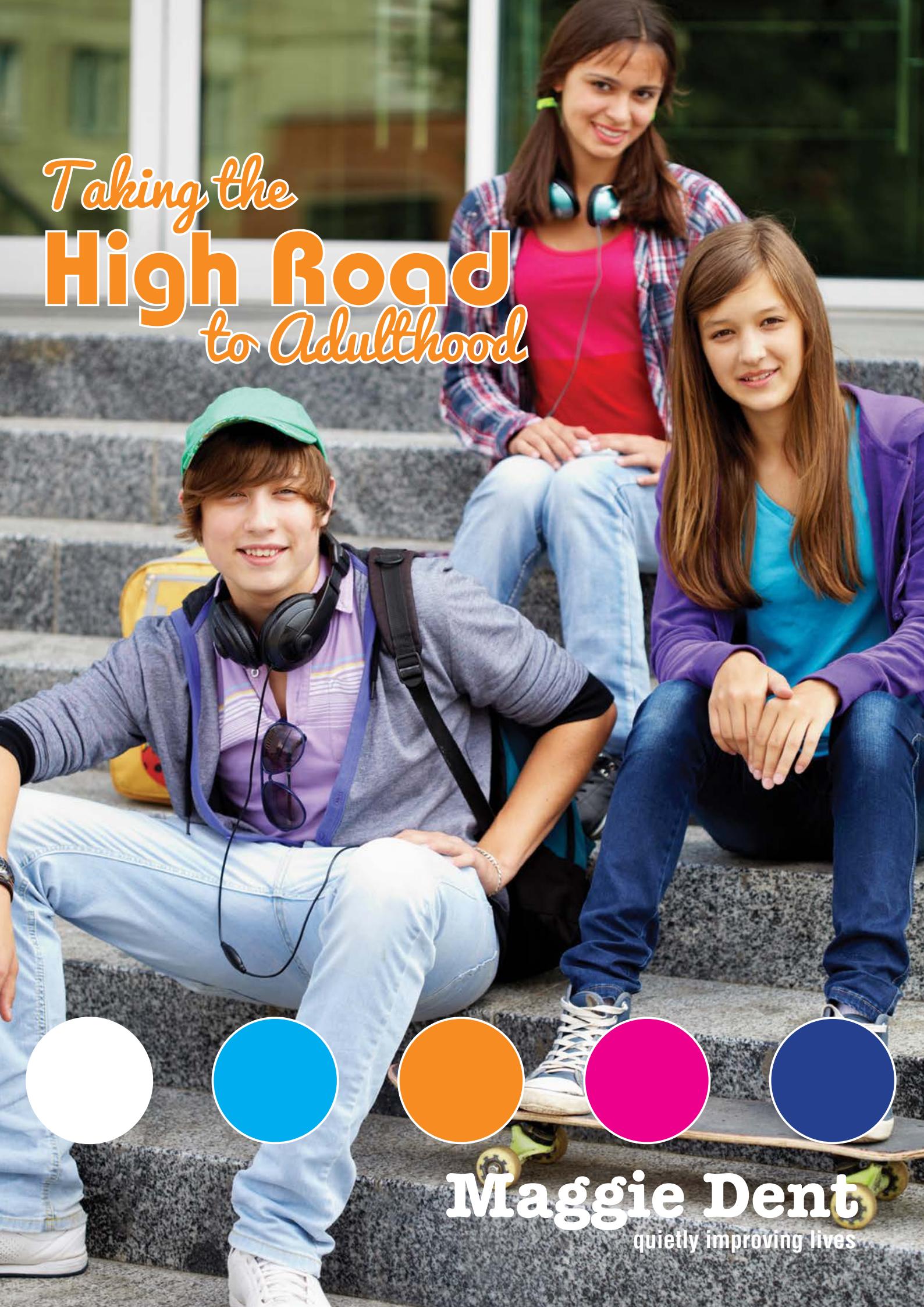


Taking the High Road to Adulthood



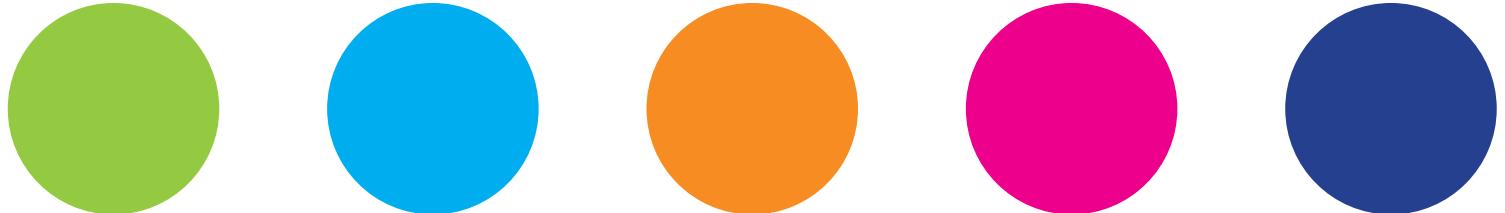
Maggie Dent
quietly improving lives

*The purpose of life is
To matter - to count
To stand for something
To have it make some
Difference that
We have lived at all.*

- Leo Rosten



Taking the
High Road
to Adulthood



Maggie Dent
quietly improving lives

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Layout & design: Katharine Middleton, Ink Box Graphics

INTRODUCTION

I care deeply about young people and have done since I too was a moody, often confused adolescent who made some big, sometimes life-threatening, mistakes. My aim is to give young people under 25 some key bits of information that can help them find their true selves and a pathway in life that allows them to make a positive difference in some way by using their natural gifts and talents.

We all go through the journey of adolescence as a passage from childhood to adulthood. The uncertainty and emotional unpredictability of this bumpy ride is all thanks to brain immaturity, massive physical and psychological changes, and changing perceptions of ourselves, others and our world.

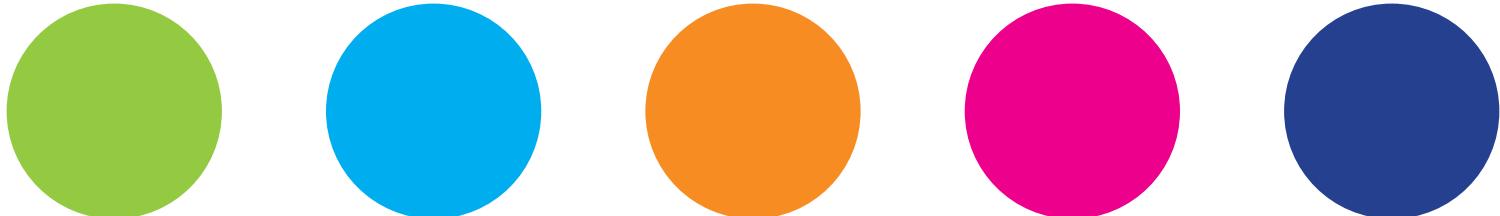
It worries me that a lot of (often well-meaning) adults spend a lot of time telling adolescents what not to do, what is good for them and why they are in some way wrong! I think all any of us needs to know is how to access the part of us that knows what's right for us.

When I became a high school teacher, I worked out right away that every single one of my students mattered. No matter what culture, gender, academic ability or dress code - I saw them all as unique and DIFFERENT, and I knew there was something deeply and sacredly worthwhile hiding within every student. My job as an educator and later as a counsellor and now as an author and speaker is to help young people find that same place within themselves.

It's a moral compass, a wise champion or inner coach, or a hidden 'spark'. I have met so many young people who've found this 'true self' part of themselves somewhere on this bumpy ride only to realise it's also the source of all the answers they'll ever need to know.

They found the high road, rather than the low road, which is always more painful and sad. Their ride was less bumpy and they also became hidden guardians of their friends and those who needed help.

My goal in creating this booklet is to help you find the high road, to make your ride to adulthood so much easier than mine was.



FINDING THE SPARK

‘Every teenager has a spark – something that is good, beautiful and useful to the world. Sparks illuminate a young person’s life and give it energy and purpose.’

— Peter L. Benson PhD, *Sparks: How Parents Can Help Ignite the Hidden Strengths of Teenagers* (2008)

I would argue that every child has a spark that can be nurtured and encouraged and that this ‘spark’ comes from the human spirit – which is best described by a diagram.

map of the personality



Let’s imagine every human has a personality made up of these three layers: the ego-mask, the nasty pasty and the spark.

The ego-mask layer is quite strong during adolescence as adolescents try to work out who they are – and who other people think they are. It can be confusing because you sooooo want to belong in a group and sometimes you will make choices so that you do belong, and yet those choices are not coming from your higher self.

Some masks that young people try out are: smart alec, class clown, show-off, bully, sporting jock, invisible mouse, the giggler, drama queen, Princess Bitchface, academically superior snob, the charmer, the brown noser – just to name a few.

Mask behaviour is quite a normal part of early adolescence and we wear masks to cover our vulnerability, our fears, our insecurities and also to protect our spirit where our spark hides. It's part of how we search for our sense of identity.

The next layer is the nasty pasty – where we hide our unexpressed negative self – check out the dark emotions hidden in there! It's sad that the worst enemy most adolescents (and many adults actually) have is themselves... we attack, blame and criticise ourselves with our ANTS.

What is an ANT? An automatic negative thought.

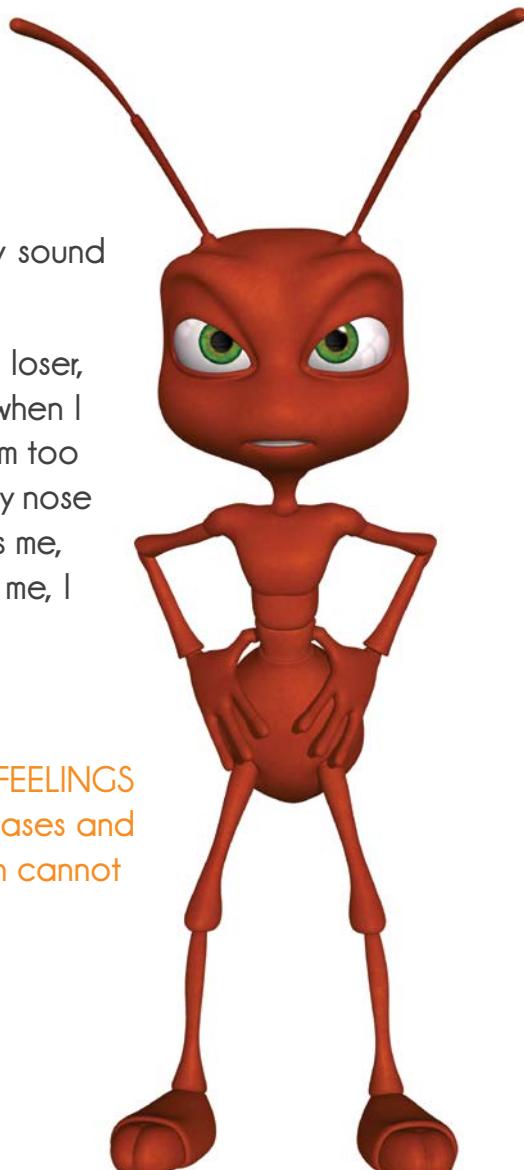
Thoughts are like silent conversations in our mind and 'ANTS' are thoughts that come from our mask or our nasty pasty because they are negative and often make us feel lousy.

ANTS are automatic negative thoughts – and they sound like an endless chatter in our heads:

"I'm useless, no-one likes me, I'm not enough, I'm a loser, I'm ugly and stupid, I'm gonna look dumb and fail when I do the English oral, what's the point in studying? – I'm too dumb to do well at school, that teacher hates me, my nose is too big, I am so fat, I just don't get it, no-one likes me, it's my fault we lost the game, no-one understands me, I can't do that, I hate me, I disgust myself..."

STOP!

YOU CAN STOP ANTS AND CHANGE THE LOUSY FEELINGS THEY CREATE. Just choose one of the following phrases and repeat these words silently in your head. Your brain cannot listen to two lots of thoughts at the same time.



CIRCUIT BREAKERS FOR NEGATIVE SELF-TALK: TAMING THE NASTY PASTY

Delete,
delete, delete.

I'm OK
exactly as I am.

I am,
I can, I will.

I am
more than this.

No matter what
happens, I am still
a worthwhile person.





WHY IS IT IMPORTANT TO GET RID OF THE ANTS?

Thoughts trigger emotions and so lots of ANTS will drown out the voice of your ‘spark’ – the caring, thoughtful inner angel or the strong and courageous peaceful warrior. Then you will feel negative emotions like self-loathing, fear, frustration, anger, sadness or sometimes even shame. When we act on these emotions, things can get ugly.

“Adolescents experience more intense urges than children and adults and the mental controls to stop them are in short supply.”

- Sheryl Feinstein, *Parenting the Teenage Brain* (2007)

If you get stuck in an ANT invasion, you can really struggle emotionally. When young people are drowning in ANTS they cannot hear the quiet voice of their inner angel or peaceful warrior and they can start being nasty to themselves or others. A BIG ANT invasion can cause adolescents to make decisions that hurt themselves and others – it can even lead to serious mood problems including depression.

Ant invasions get worse when we struggle with sleep.

Experts say that adolescents need about 9 hours of good sleep each night to ensure you stay well and can keep the ANTS under control. Poor sleep not only makes you angrier, it can make you get sicker, struggle with learning, and think even more negatively about yourself and others. The worst thing about poor sleep is that it can increase your chances of becoming seriously depressed. Sometimes we can start to panic about not being able to sleep and that is like inviting every ANT in the country to come into your head!

WHAT CAN HELP YOU GET TO SLEEP?

1. Have a go to bed routine – leave your computer and mobile in the kitchen from around 9pm.
2. Have shower or bath and wash off all the ‘yuk’ from the day.
3. Some find hot milky drinks help calm them down.
4. Do 10 really big, long, slow, deep breaths to a slow count of 4.
5. Drink some sleepytime tea. Chamomile tea can help – you can sweeten with little honey.
6. Take some calming drops from Australian Bush Flower Essences or Bach flowers (you can get these at many chemists/health food stores).
7. Do some tapping on the fingers next to your nails (see diagram for Acupressure points).
8. Do some yoga or tai chi moves.
9. Use a calming audio track (I have some tracks you can download from my website store like Relax and Escape. [Beach Bliss](#) or [Moonlight Magic](#)). Remember, it takes at least 5-6 listens before your body starts to relax automatically. [See page 24 for details.](#)
10. Play calming music or nature sounds to soothe your tension away.

EMOTIONAL ACUPRESSURE RELEASE POINTS



Often the nasty pasty or ego does or says things that can hurt and hinder others. This can be name-calling, sending mean messages, ignoring others and deliberately embarrassing others.

MUCH OF ADOLESCENT NASTINESS IS JUST THAT - NASTY!

- ✓ Showing off
- ✓ Being silly: "it was just a joke!"
- ✓ Being dumb
- ✓ Attention seeking because you feel left out
- ✓ Speaking without thinking
- ✓ Trying to be funny
- ✓ Trying to make yourself look better
- ✓ Unable to manage big ugly feelings
- ✓ Dumping your negative feelings, like being angry or jealous, on others

Good friends, supportive parents and adult allies (I call them 'lighthouses') can really help you clear ANTS from your mind.

Remember if you are struggling with ANT invasions you are not bad, damaged or an awful person. You are simply lost and can't find your inner compass, which allows you to make better decisions.

Sometimes when we are struggling with an ANT invasion we do dumb things to try to make ourselves feel better. For boys, risky behaviour triggers a brain chemical called 'dopamine' and it makes the ANTS go away for a while. Sometimes adolescents try to feel better by eating junk food and lollies, drinking soft drinks or energy drinks. or discharging ANTS at other people or even property.

Some choices young people make to help clear ANTS and their 'big ugly emotional states' can lead to serious problems like mean behaviour to others at home and school, alcohol or drug abuse, aggressive behaviour, self-harm and patterns of self-destructive choices.

We must remember that the pre frontal lobe (the last part of the brain to finish developing) — which helps young people better manage ANTS and hear their higher self — mostly does not develop until well over 20!

By learning how to clear ANTS in healthy ways, we benefit throughout life. The inner coach is always trying to be heard over the noise of ANTS.

TRY THIS:

Pause for a moment. Take a couple of deep breaths. And now pay attention to the next thoughts you think.

What happens?

They disappear for a few moments. See how you can influence thoughts by being conscious and aware of them? So pausing and observing your thoughts from time to time will give you more influence over the inner voice you choose to listen to.

Check out the diagram below, which shows that the brain makes chemicals (which in turn make moods and emotional states) and it makes ANTs (negative) or SPARKs (positive).

You make your own brain chemicals and change your moods.



Positive

- Serotonin
- Dopamine
- Endorphins

Negative

- Cortisol
- Adrenaline
- Noradrenaline

Pleasurable activities – both real and imagined – can help you feel better in your inner and outer world. Remember everything begins with a thought and keeping an eye on your thoughts will help you to clear negative ones when they appear. So **kind thoughts, grateful thoughts or thoughts about how to help or encourage others** always make positive brain chemicals and act like ANT poison!

HOW TO MAKE POSITIVE BRAIN CHEMICALS

Doing things you enjoy, which are respectful of yourself and others, creates positive brain chemicals. Here are some that work:

- ✓ **Athletic success & sport** – team and individual
- ✓ **Artistic & creative expression** – drama, dance, music, art
- ✓ **Deep relaxation & stillness** – calming CDs/MP3s, quiet time at beach
- ✓ **Safe, honest human connection** – deep human connectedness, family, friendship
- ✓ **Significant immersion in nature** – walking, surfing, fishing, walking the dog
- ✓ **Acts of service** – helping others
- ✓ **Discovering new purpose & meaning** – starting something new, gratitude journal
- ✓ **Ritual & ceremony** – campfires, rites of passage, religious activities, making up your own
- ✓ **Celebration** – social gatherings, hanging out with friends
- ✓ **Laughter & lightness**



"Laughter increases production of immunity-boosting gamma interferon and speeds up the production of new immune cells. And it also reduces the stress hormone cortisol, which can weaken the immune response."

- Peter Doskoch, from the article Happily Ever Laughter, *Psychology Today*, Page 32, 7th Oct 1996

Your higher self is a quiet part of you that does not do ANTS. It needs you to pause, maybe take a few deep breaths – and then ask:

"Is this choice for my highest good?"

or

"Is this the high road or the low road?"

Sometimes you can feel the answer like a sensation of discomfort in your gut, a chill up your arms or it just feels lousy – this is your spark warning you to make a different choice.



UNDERSTANDING BIG UGLY EMOTIONAL STATES

THE EMOTIONAL BAROMETER

Our negative emotions from painful experiences in our lives stay in our nervous system. In adolescence the intensity of emotions is much stronger and so ANT attacks, nasty behaviour of other people and moments of challenge that make us feel useless or stupid can cause our nervous system to gradually overload like a barometer that keeps rising when the weather is getting worse.

The **TIPPING POINT** – when everything gets too hard and a young person can explode with violence, hurt themselves, run away, do something really dangerous (because they don't care anymore) or take their life – can happen quite easily. It's often a small thing that pushes an adolescent past the TIPPING POINT. Maybe one nasty comment, a mean SMS, comment or post, or even a failed test at school is all it might take. If your family, friends or 'lighthouses' know you are near your TIPPING POINT they can help you find your inner coach or 'spark'. **It's a sign of strength to ask for HELP – it is your spark guiding you if you ask for help.**



SIGNS THAT THE TIPPING POINT MAY BE NEAR:

1. Racing heart/palpitations and/or hyperventilation.
2. Tension in muscles and/or excessive perspiration.
3. A dry mouth.
4. Often feeling restless, apprehensive or on edge.
5. Panic attacks and shallow rapid breathing.
6. Difficulty concentrating and an inability to relax.
7. Difficulty in getting to sleep and disturbed sleep.
8. Pre-activity tension or avoiding usual activities.
9. Feeling frightened for no obvious reason.
10. Irresistible urge to run away
11. Morbid thoughts regarding people close to you.
12. Constant worry/apprehension about the future.
13. Suicidal thoughts or a fear of dying.

NB: Research shows 80% of people have suicidal thoughts but for most, it's a passing thought that they don't act on. If these thoughts are persistent, you really do need to talk about it and seek support from a friend, parent or lighthouse (see 26 for professional support services).

HOT TIPS

1. Not everyone will agree with you. That's OK.
2. Not everyone will like you. That's OK.
3. Not everyone will be friendly. That's OK.
4. Not everyone will see the world like you. That's OK.
5. Not everything will go the way you want. That's OK.





BEFORE YOU POST, TAG, UPLOAD, SHARE OR SEND ... PAUSE, TAKE A BREATH AND ASK YOURSELF:

1. Would I be OK receiving this message or seeing a photo, video or comment like this about me?
2. Would I be OK if this was plastered on a bus shelter outside my school or in the main street?
3. Would I be happy for my Nan to see this?

IF YOU ANSWER YES 3 TIMES,
THEN GO FOR IT. IF NOT, HIT DELETE.

Better safe than sorry, online and in the real world.

CYBERBULLING

If you've been the victim of cyberbullying, please know you're not alone and you don't have to stay silent.

The Office of the eSafety Commissioner is a wonderful place to start if you have any concerns regarding image abuse. They have information and can support young people and their families to take action if this has happened to them.

Stymie

Stymie.com.au is a great resource that allows students to make anonymous notifications about their peers to stop them being bystanders to cyberbullying.



'OH NO' MOMENTS! – FOR WHEN THINGS GO WRONG

There will be times when things go wrong or you will fail. Everyone fails and mucks up, all through their lives. You may have a moment when you feel embarrassed in a social situation. I clearly remember an incident when a Year 9 boy ‘dacked’ another boy in the quad at lunchtime in a big high school I was teaching at. The boy who had his pants pulled down to expose his buttocks – an enormously embarrassing moment – was quickly thrown a towel by one of his mates. He then stood up and pretended he was a matador and it was really funny. So within seconds he had turned a potentially awful situation into something else. He might have found that much harder if his mate hadn’t been so quick to help – so both boys used their spark, not their mask or nasty pasty, to turn around an ‘OH NO’ situation.

Hint: It’s not what happens or what is said that’s the problem – it’s what we say to ourselves afterwards that causes the angst!

It’s good to think of something to say to yourself when things go wrong for you: maybe choose one and use that all the time. I say things like:

1. That’s a ‘bugger’ moment!
2. Oh dear – never mind!
3. Now this is really interesting.
4. This won’t go down in history as my finest hour.
5. This too will pass.
6. Must have forgotten my lucky undies today.

Why not write down a statement you think will help you when things go wrong and stick it on the back of your bedroom door or on the bathroom mirror.

A FEW THINGS ABOUT BULLYING

Nastiness is often just meaningless and a part of growing up. Remember it is just the mask or the nasty pasty pretending to be you. However, bullying is different.

Bullying is where there is a deliberate intent to hurt another with an unacceptable use of power and it is often repeated and it threatens an individual’s wellbeing.

Bullies are often triggered to fight when they feel unsafe, inadequate or rejected. Both bullies and those they bully are stuck in their masks or nasty pasty and they can’t hear their ‘spark.’ Many would not even believe they had one.

Hint: Remember again, it’s not what happens or what is said that is the problem – it’s what we say to ourselves afterwards that causes the angst.

HELPFUL THINGS TO SAY TO YOURSELF ... IF SOMEONE IS MEAN

No matter what you say or do to me I am still a worthwhile person.

My Mum/Dad loves me.

Their spark must be asleep.

They are really just jealous of me!

It's obvious who has the problem here.



THINGS TO SAY TO THOSE BEING NASTY

Thanks for sharing.

Wink at them!

Have a good day...

Whatever you reckon!

Just nod, smile and turn
and walk away!



Remember, bullies are experiencing a serious ANT invasion inside their heads and they can't see how they'd be a worthwhile person if only they made better choices. Often they have been bullied and are just doing what they have learned. If others stand up to support those being bullied, often the bully will stop. The 'spark' inside all of us wants everyone to be treated kindly, respectfully and fairly.

WHEN THINGS GET REALLY TOUGH

Sometimes adolescents can get stuck in destructive patterns of behaviour like binge drinking, drug taking, unhealthy sexual activity, excessive gaming, aggressive and violent actions, eating disorders, self-harm, delinquent and socially unacceptable behaviour (stealing, graffiti, destroying public property, gatecrashing parties, king hits, online bullying, etc.).

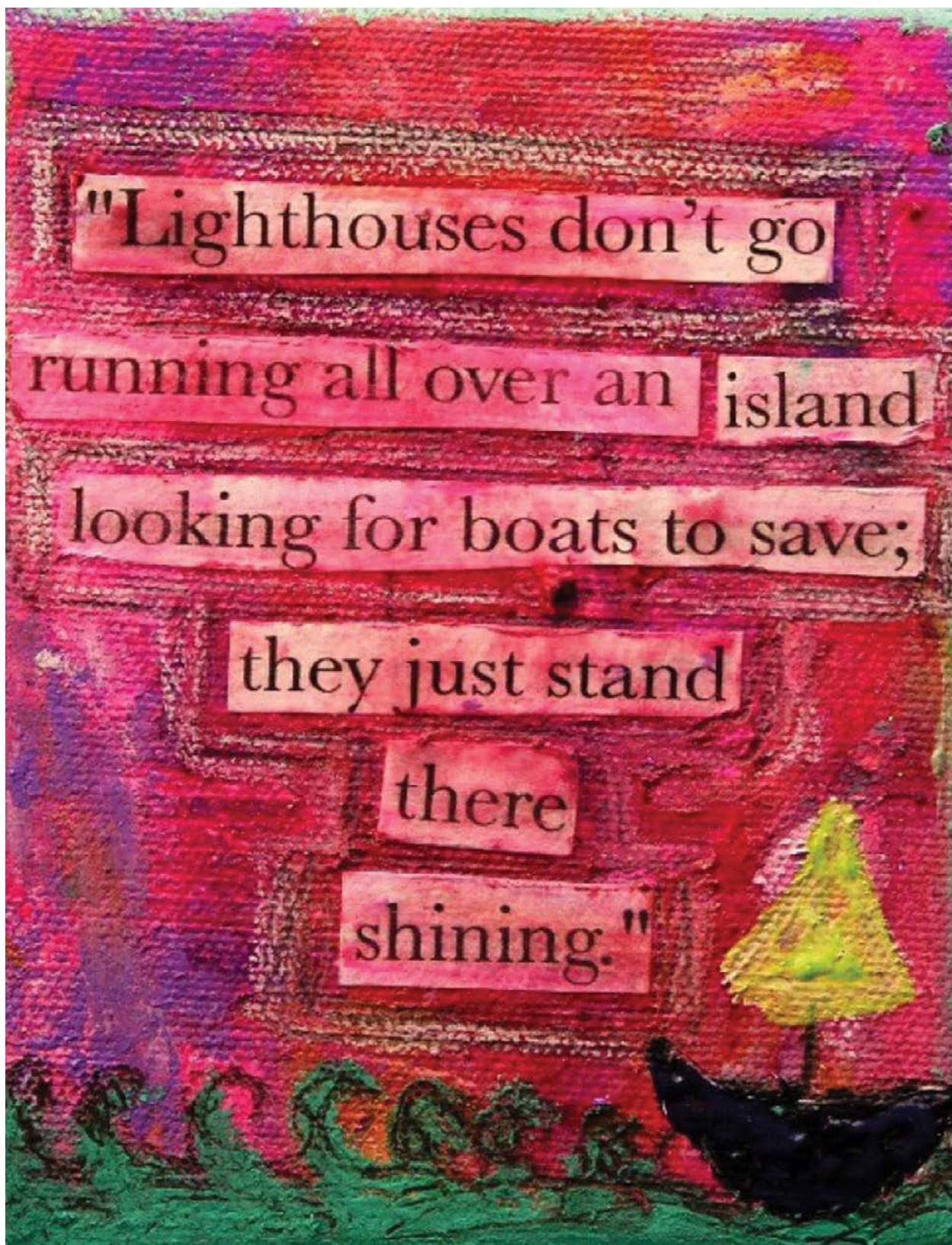
These are all choices being made by the mask or the nasty pasty of their personality and from the low road they can seem like fun or OK. You might feel hurting yourself is OK and that's because the ANTS are convincing you that you are bad, stupid or it doesn't matter!

I once thought I was invincible and in the search for those 'feel-good' brain chemicals I crashed a car racing some boys in a farm paddock. Even though I was a clever student academically, I still struggled to make choices that helped or encouraged me to see anything good about myself.

It can be difficult while your brain is doing strange things developmentally, like pruning and trimming neural pathways that affect how we think! I developed an addiction in my early teens that was really hard for me to overcome later however the older I became, the more I could hear my higher self, my 'inner coach'. My relationship with my Mum had been really rocky my whole life and so I felt there must've been something wrong with me. I created ANTS that told me I was worthless, unlovable and that no-one cared. I was such a dark, moody and highly critical adolescent! Fortunately my sister was a 'lighthouse' for me even though I was pretty mean to her sometimes.

Things can happen in life that will really challenge you. Some of the biggest challenges will be those that you are unable to resolve like someone you love dying, serious bullying, getting really sick, or experiencing a major life change like losing a job or a relationship breakdown. These challenges can last for ages and the stress they can create can cause you much emotional turmoil or overwhelm.

If this happens to you know that you will need someone to share your story with and help tame those ANTS. This is where an adult ally comes in really handy or someone who loves and cares about you – maybe a family member. If you don't have an adult ally or 'a lighthouse' please find a chaplain at school, a school nurse, a special teacher, coach or school psychologist who is a really good listener. If this is still too difficult, there are many helplines that have trained 'listeners' who you can chat to online or on the phone who will give their time to share your journey.



Everyone on the bumpy ride to adulthood needs at least one **lighthouse** to ensure they thrive and become the best person they can be. They help young people take the high road and avoid the low road. They stoke the 'spark' within especially when you cannot find it! They are always there, safe, accepting and they believe in the inner angel or the secret warrior that lies within every human. They shine light into the darkness and they bring hope where there is none.

BEING A GOOD FRIEND

It is a sign of strength to reach out for help when you are struggling – and being there for our friends is important too. Be careful not to carry them when they need professional help or you will end up exhausted.

Also remember to be a good friend or listener you must be confidential. Never repeat anything that has been said to you **EXCEPT:**

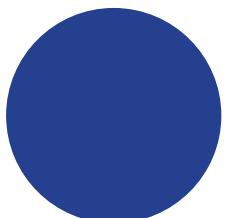
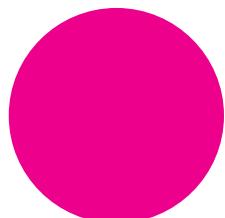
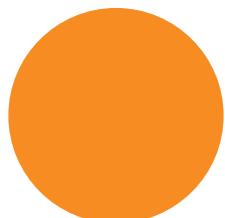
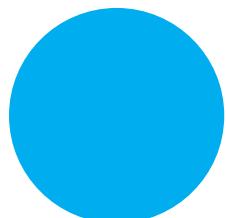
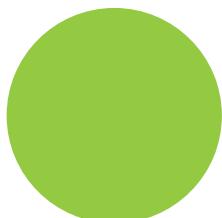
You must inform a person of authority if a friend is expressing feelings of being suicidal or at risk of harming themselves. You have a duty of care to tell someone like a parent, teacher, counsellor or chaplain. It is much better to be safe than sorry. AND if someone's life is in immediate danger, please dial 000 immediately.

STAYING ON THE HIGH ROAD

I have met so many amazing wise, caring and courageous adolescents over the last 35 years. Many of these had challenging times before they realised that there was something inside them that was inherently good, no matter how bad things were at the time.

One 15-year-old told me how she discovered her inner angel. She was reading on her bed one Saturday morning when she had a sudden impulse to go for a ride on her bike out through the paddocks. As she came over the first hill she saw the tractor down near a fence and her impulse became stronger to go down there. When she arrived she found her Dad pinned under the tractor – she was able to go and get help and her Dad's life was saved. She said: "After that I always knew there was something wise and powerful that existed within me that was always watching out for me – that wanted me to be the best person I could be".

When things go wrong, look for a lesson learned from that 'bugger moment' and then keep on moving! Life brings us moments of joy and challenge – no matter who we are, no matter how old we are – so just accept every experience as it is. The spark within can be like an inner angel or a peaceful warrior for both girls and boys. Sometimes we need to be caring and thoughtful (inner angel) and at other times we need to be strong and courageous (peaceful warrior.) It sounds epic but it's pretty subtle.





YOU KNOW YOU'RE ON THE HIGH ROAD WHEN:

- ✓ You study hard for a test because effort helps create success.
- ✓ You stand beside a friend who is being bullied.
- ✓ You're late for class because you stopped to talk to a student who was crying upset near the library.
- ✓ You refuse to speak badly of another person when your friends are being mean online or offline.
- ✓ You welcome a new student to school.
- ✓ You choose not to drink alcohol or take drugs and still have fun.
- ✓ You talk a friend out of posting a photo online that he/she might regret later.
- ✓ You don't speak disrespectfully about members of the opposite sex.
- ✓ You step forward when something unjust or unfair happens.
- ✓ You wear clothes that suit your body type even if they are not 'sexy'.
- ✓ You keep an eye on a drunk friend at a party and make sure she gets home safely.
- ✓ You organise a fundraising event to support flood relief for families who have lost their homes.
- ✓ You enjoy your own company and your own space.
- ✓ You find something good in everyone.
- ✓ You choose not to smoke even though your best mate does.
- ✓ You accept being a school leader.
- ✓ You stay behind after PE to help the teacher pack away gear.
- ✓ You take the car keys off your friends when they drink alcohol at a party.
- ✓ You help an opponent off the ground after a tackle.
- ✓ You strive to practice sporting skills so you can do well.
- ✓ You pause and check in with your peaceful warrior before doing risky stuff.

A simple way to check in with yourself is to ask yourself if you are truly on the high road or the low road. Keep checking in with your spark – it's the thing that's going to get you through.

SOME MORE INSPIRATION

Check out my TedX talk for some more thoughts on adolescence and taking the high road:

<https://youtu.be/2lTEDCSK68E>



Also please read my blog article "A Letter to a 21st Century Teen" www.maggiedent.com/blog/a-letter-to-a-21st-century-teen/.

Calming audios

In the section on sleep in this book, I mentioned calming audios including my audio Relax and Escape, which I am gifting with this book. You can download that for free <https://soundcloud.com/maggiedentauthor/relax-and-escape-free-download/s-PhxOW>.



Also check out:

Smiling Mind - I am an ambassador for this wonderful not-for-profit organisation that has a fantastic free app ... A modern meditation app for young people that helps with stress, anxiety, depression, positive thinking and general wellbeing.

www.smilingmind.com.au/smiling-mind-app

The Headspace meditation app is another excellent resource that teaches adolescents how to meditate and in just a few minutes a day.

www.headspace.com/headspace-meditation-app

RECAP: ON YOUR BUMPY RIDE TO ADULTHOOD...

- ✓ pause often
- ✓ question your ANTS
- ✓ find your unique strengths
- ✓ listen to your own inner coach
- ✓ know you can make choices that make positive brain chemicals
- ✓ take care of your friends
- ✓ know that you matter no matter what
- ✓ find a 'lighthouse' you can trust
- ✓ choose the high road rather than the low road.

When things go wrong – look for a lesson learned from that ‘bugger moment’ and then keep on moving! Life brings us moments of joy and challenge – no matter who we are, no matter how old we are – so just accept every experience as it is. You have the power to choose HOW to embrace all of life. Your ‘spark’ is always there, guiding you – pause, be still and seek your own answers.

I wish you well on your bumpy ride...

If you need someone to help you feel safe, accepted and heard, please call or visit:

Kids Help Line: 1800 55 1800 or kidshelp.com.au

Life Line: 13 11 14

Suicide Callback Service: 1300 65 94 67

Headspace: 1800 650 890 or headspace.org.au

www.reachout.com.au

www.youthbeyondblue.com

www.drughelp.gov.au

youthfocus.com.au

biteback.org.au

brave4you.psy.uq.edu.au/teen-program

Some of these services also offer email or web counselling and live chat.



YOU MAY ALSO LIKE

If you found this book helpful, you might also like to check out:



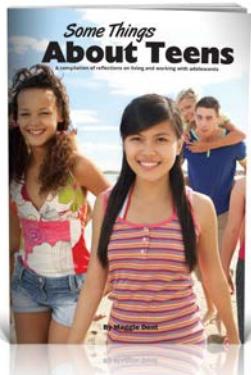
Saving Our Adolescents online seminar

A great presentation to watch with your parents to better understand and have conversations about what's going on for you during adolescence.

Your Kit Bag for a Very Bumpy Ride bundle

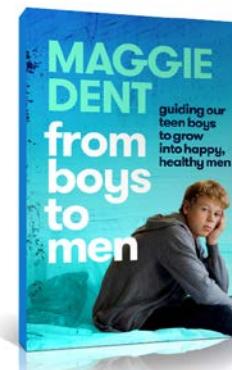
This resource pack of audio tracks and ebooks is packed with great stuff for adolescents to help them realise their potential. The bumpy ride from childhood to adulthood can be a very challenging, confusing and risky time... but it doesn't have to be. With the right tools in your kit bag, an understanding of what's going on and some good support, adolescence can also be an amazing time to learn new things, find your passion and have fun. **USB or Instant download.**

AND SOME BOOKS ABOUT TEENS...



Some Things About Teens

A compilation of reflections on living and working with adolescents (12-25)



From Boys to Men

A guide on how to help tween and teen boys to develop into good men.

Available from www.maggiedent.com

FB/YouTube/Soundcloud/Instagram: [maggiedentauthor](#)
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Maggie Dent
quietly improving lives



"I care deeply about young people and have done since I too was a moody, often confused adolescent who made some big, sometimes life-threatening, mistakes. My aim is to give young people under 25 some key bits of information that can help them find their true selves and a pathway in life that allows them to make a positive difference in some way by using their natural gifts and talents."

- Maggie Dent

We all go through the journey of adolescence as a passage from childhood to adulthood. The uncertainty and emotional unpredictability of this bumpy ride is all thanks to brain immaturity, massive physical and psychological changes, and changing perceptions of ourselves, others and our world.

Former teacher, counsellor, author and speaker Maggie Dent believes that all any of us needs to know in life is how to access the part of us that knows what's right for us as individuals.

Whether you think of it as a moral compass, a wise champion or inner coach, a hidden 'spark' - it's also the source of all the answers we'll ever need to know. It's about finding the high road, rather than the low road, which is always more painful and sad. Taking the high road makes for a less bumpy ride to adulthood.

In this easy-to-read book, Maggie offers simple guidance for young people to:

- » finding their own spark
- » reading their personality map
- » understanding and eradicating ANTS (automatic negative thoughts)
- » breaking the circuit on negative self-talk
- » managing BUGS (big ugly emotional states)
- » getting a better night's sleep
- » knowing what to do when things go wrong
- » surviving and thriving when things get really tough
- » being a good friend
- » staying on the high road.

Maggie draws on more than 30 years' experience of working and/or living with adolescents, as well as building on wisdom from her bestselling book, *Saving Our Adolescents* (2010), to produce this concise, practical, accessible guide for anyone aged 12-25.

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