

The Available Parent: Radical Optimism for Raising Teens and Tweens

By Dr. John Duffy

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*Number one on Cyrus Webb's list of "Books Every Man Should Read"

Teenagers are left feeling unheard and misunderstood, and parents are left feeling bewildered by the changes in their child at adolescence and their sudden lack of effectiveness as parents. The parent has become unavailable, the teen responds in kind, and a negative, often destructive cycle of communication begins. Well, the truth of the matter is, you can physically be right next to someone and still not really be available to them. If you need them to be something they’re not, if you are harsh, criticizing and judging, if your anxiety is center stage, then you are not truly available.

The available parent of a teenager is open to discussion, offering advice and problem-solving, but not insisting on it. He allows his child to make some mistakes, setting limits, primarily where health and safety are concerned. He never lectures – he is available but not controlling. The available parent is self-aware, and keeps his own emotions in check when dealing with his teen. He is unconditionally loving and accepting, and open to new and different ways of thinking. As such, he is neither cruel nor dismissive, ever.

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Editorial Review

Review

"...a healthy dose of optimism and lots of practical suggestions."
—Publishers Weekly

"Every parent of a child or teen will benefit from keeping this wise book on their night stand. It's likely they will want it handy to read over and over again." — Judy Ford, author of *Every Day Love: The Delicate Art of Caring for Each Other* and *Wonderful Ways to Love a Child*

"Dr. Duffy provides a clear, straightforward, doable answer for parents: Stay in touch! Research clearly shows that an open, friendly parent-teen relationship is a major factor in protecting kids from harm. The age-old question for parents of teens has always been: 'How do I relate to these new kids of mine—how should I manage them?' *The Available Parent* provides a clear blueprint for a practical and effective response: Manage the problems you have to, but above all else, stay in touch!"
—Dr. Thomas W. Phelan, author of *1-2-3 Magic* and *Surviving Your Adolescents*

"Dr. John Duffy's fresh new concept of availability in parenting is an idea that meets the moment. With the pace of society constantly accelerating, we need *The Available Parent* now more than ever! Dr. John's writing is smart, approachable and right on the mark. His blend of practical ideas and colorful examples delivers great insights. Most importantly, I am a better parent thanks to this book."
—Eric Langshur, Co-author of *We Carry Each Other*

"I couldn't put *The Available Parent* down because I found my inner voice kept saying "Yeah, that's right!" or "Oh, dang, I wish I had known that when my girls were teens." When I finished reading, I called my two daughters, now in their twenties, and asked them if my husband and I were Available Parents. They both reassured me that we were--and still are. John's a brilliant writer with keen intuition into how kids think and how parents can, sometimes unknowingly, sabotage their relationship. John has used his vast experience to provide parents with the inside dope into how kids view their lives, and what they really need from their parents to make the leap into becoming mentally healthy young adults. Best of all, John relays their amazing stories of growth in smooth, witty, and helpful prose. Any parent with a child--no matter what the age--should read and learn from this book.
—Eileen Norris, contributing writer and editor of the bestselling *You: The Smart Patient* by Drs. Mehmet Oz and Mike Roizen

"What a true gift. This outstanding book truly gives you a blueprint to fully be available to your teen son or daughter. You will marvel at your teen's sense of competence, can-do attitude, and improved self-esteem. Teens and parents are both resilient; with the tools provided in the remarkable book *The Available Parent*, you and your teenager can both enjoy your new and improve relationship."
—Dr. Kate Smart Mursau, co-author of *Smart Parenting: How to Raise Happy, Can-Do Kids*

"Every parent who wants to give it their best shot in working with, and not in opposition to, their teen, needs to check in with Dr. John Duffy, and apply his "available parent" strategy. As a professional journalist, author, and mom of three teens who writes about parenting, I was so glad to have found Dr. Duffy in time to give me the tools to quickly understand what it means to be an available parent. To my surprise and delight,

as I intentionally make myself more available as a mom, my teens are now purposefully reaching out to engage with me! Dr. Duffy is a trusted guide and cool guy. He truly cares and is all about helping parents and their children find the bright light in each other. He helped to open a whole new channel of communication for me with my teens, and allowed me to appreciate their uniqueness and focus on that, instead of the moments that "challenge."
—Mary Beth Sammons, author of *Second Acts That Change Lives: Making a Difference in the World*

"John Duffy has written one of the most eye-opening parenting books around, an inspiring, important tool for all parents. From his expertise and experience working with teens, John gives us the key ingredient for a healthy, successful parent-teen relationship…. being *The Available Parent.* What a simple yet profound title, and what a rude awakening for me! John masterfully defines available parenting and helps parents stop the unhealthy dance with their kids. He gives excellent insight, advice and approaches to become the effective parent we desire to be. And throughout the book, he uses real life excerpts from teens discussing their issues so parents can understand what is really going on in their world. This is a must-read and is essential to building a healthy relationship with your teen."
—Megan Walls, CEC, ACC, Founder, Conscious Connections Coaching

"The Available Parent is a valuable and thought-provoking resource that's filled with many precious lessons and gives parents a unique perspective on cultivating a healthy relationship with their kids."
—Psych Central

From the Inside Flap

From the foreword:

Suddenly, it seems, you are the parent of a teenager. It's a role you have looked forward to for several years with a good deal of concern and apprehension. And sure enough, now that the job is upon you, you realize it is a different world! Your formerly friendly son now seems more sullen, moody and distant. Over the last few months your daughter has apparently come to believe that her parents are out of touch with reality. Where are these kids coming from?

As one mother put it, "My daughter went to high school her first day as a freshman and never returned. I lost my baby!" Through things like Facebook and texting, teens nowadays seem to spend their entire days "wired" to each other. When they're not connecting with peers, they are surfing the Internet, playing video games or watching TV. It's as if there is no more room in their lives for parents. Attempts to communicate at the dinner table, such as the notorious "How was your day?" are met with curt responses like "Fine." End of conversation. Another attempt at pulling teeth has failed.

You feel hurt, rejected, angry and scared. What if my son starts using drugs? What if my daughter starts having sex? What in God's name am I supposed to be doing with This Kid!?

In The Available Parent, Dr. John Duffy sticks his neck out

and offers a clear answer: As the parent of a teenager your top priority—before anything else—is to stay in touch with your rapidly changing youngster. Staying in touch is the essence of what Dr. Duffy means by availability. Availability is the ability to understand your child's need to pull away. It's the ability to remember your own teenage years and—even though you may feel rejected at times—to treat your retreating child with respect. Availability is the ability to leave your fears and your ego behind and to really listen to what your adolescent has to say, even if it makes you cringe.

Not an easy task by any means, but The Available Parent gives a clear roadmap for carrying the mission out. Dr. Duffy first takes you inside the mind of a teenager, so you can understand where this kid is coming from. He then explains why some parents' natural inclinations, such as snooping, micromanaging, blinders and bribery, never work. Next Dr. Duffy describes the notion of parental availability, and he offers specific methods for recreating the connection with your adolescent offspring. For those who are fearful that availability means laissez faire parenting, there is a chapter on discipline and behavioral contracts.

The goal of Dr. Duffy's book is to help parents of teens understand and define their job. For moms and dads that means, among other things, accepting the fact that their children are supposed to eventually break away, leave home and become attached to new people. But the goal of The Available Parent is also that teens and parents enjoy one another's company as much as possible now while they're still living in the same house.

What in God's name am I supposed to be doing with This Kid? The Available Parent gives you the answer.

Thomas W. Phelan, Ph.D.
1-2-3 Magic: Effective Discipline for Children 2-12

From the Back Cover

Embrace Fearless Parenting

Have you ever been bewildered by the changes in your child and your sudden lack of effectiveness as a parent? When hugs and family fun have been replaced by silence, slamming doors and an ever-changing array of moods, you need new tools. Top teen expert Dr. John Duffy has encountered all of this and more in his family counseling practice and offers excellent advice, clear strategies and teen-tested solutions in *The Available Parent.*

Dr. Duffy can help you shift the dynamic in your relationship with your teenager. Imagine what it would be like if healthy conversations replaced angry outbursts or petulant silence. Using the techniques in *The*

Available Parent, you can begin to enjoy a healthy, satisfying, new kind of relationship with your teenager—one based on a foundation of radical optimism, rather than fear-based control. At a time when many "helicopter parents" micromanage and under-appreciate their children, Dr. Duffy's step-by-step guide is an innovative approach to taking care of teens and tweens. You'll see that it's the available parent that fosters an extraordinary teenager.

What you'll learn inside this book:
• How to understand the adolescent mind
• What teen rebellion is really about
• How to build your child's self-esteem and confidence
• How to create a successful behavioral contract

Users Review

From reader reviews:

Maria Asbury:

Now a day folks who Living in the era just where everything reachable by match the internet and the resources inside can be true or not require people to be aware of each information they get. How individuals to be smart in acquiring any information nowadays? Of course the reply is reading a book. Looking at a book can help people out of this uncertainty Information specifically this The Available Parent: Radical Optimism for Raising Teens and Tweens book as this book offers you rich data and knowledge. Of course the info in this book hundred % guarantees there is no doubt in it as you know.

Debra Davis:

Spent a free the perfect time to be fun activity to accomplish! A lot of people spent their spare time with their family, or all their friends. Usually they carrying out activity like watching television, about to beach, or picnic inside park. They actually doing same thing every week. Do you feel it? Do you need to something different to fill your own personal free time/ holiday? Could possibly be reading a book is usually option to fill your free time/ holiday. The first thing that you'll ask may be what kinds of e-book that you should read. If you want to consider look for book, may be the e-book untitled The Available Parent: Radical Optimism for Raising Teens and Tweens can be good book to read. May be it can be best activity to you.

Aletha Bassett:

Often the book The Available Parent: Radical Optimism for Raising Teens and Tweens has a lot details on it. So when you check out this book you can get a lot of benefit. The book was authored by the very famous author. Tom makes some research prior to write this book. This particular book very easy to read you can get the point easily after looking over this book.

Rachel Morris:

Many people spending their period by playing outside together with friends, fun activity together with family

or just watching TV the entire day. You can have new activity to enjoy your whole day by looking at a book. Ugh, you think reading a book really can hard because you have to take the book everywhere? It all right you can have the e-book, taking everywhere you want in your Smartphone. Like The Available Parent: Radical Optimism for Raising Teens and Tweens which is finding the e-book version. So , try out this book? Let's view.

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