

Advance Praise for *Lions and Tigers and Teens:*

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“Myrna Haskell shares her educational tips for parents of teenagers. From texting to safe driving tips, each important topic is shared in a lighthearted way - a personal touch, but also a matter of fact style that could change lives.”

— Stephanie Harris Dixon ~ publisher of *STIC Magazine*,
Raleigh, NC

“Myrna Beth Haskell’s insightful columns on teenage life (and our parental response to it) give a leg up to all those struggling with the often-nonsensical behavior of adolescents. Her wise and reasoned advice covers the gamut from small (their refusing to wear a coat outside in cold weather) to large issues (driving safely) and offers a welcome patch of sanity to parents.”

— Abigail Gary ~ editor of *About Our Children*, Teaneck, NJ

“Myrna Haskell provides timely information to help parents of teens and tweens. She covers topics that are of concern to parents in a light and lively manner, incorporating interviews and information from experts.”

— Crickett Gibbons ~ editor of *Carolina Parent Magazine*,
Durham, NC

“Myrna Haskell offers invaluable advice with wit and wisdom. *Lions and Tigers and Teens* is a great read for anyone who has teenage children or who works with them.”

— Mary Leonard ~ associate of the Institute for Writing and Thinking (Bard College), literacy specialist, and author of *The Sweet and Low Down* (a collection of poetry).

“Myrna Beth Haskell’s column has been a great asset to our magazine. We receive wonderful feedback from our readers who look forward to her insightful contribution each month. Rather than giving stock answers regarding the challenges parents face when raising teens, Haskell always digs deeper. With the help of knowledgeable experts in the field, she provides real solutions parents can use.”

— Jillian Melnyk, editor of *Genesee Valley Parent Magazine*, Pittsford, NY

“Myrna Haskell’s *Lions and Tigers and Teens* gives just the kind of help and advice that parents need when dealing with the problems of teenage children. Using the findings of noted psychologists, Haskell gives common-sense answers to the questions that any parent of a teenager might ask. She writes in a breezy, cheerful, and easy-to-understand manner that makes her a favorite among readers.”

— Eugene Mirabelli, PhD, author of *The Goddess in Love with a Horse* and other novels, co-founder and former director of Alternative Literary Programs in the Schools (ALPS), and professor emeritus.

“Myrna Haskell’s, *Lions and Tigers and Teens* is a big hit with our readers! Haskell provides detailed information in a comfortable way that allows our audience to enjoy the reading and not just be informed.”

— Andrew P. Reynolds ~ owner of *The People’s Press*,
Wallingford, CT

Where to Find this Book:

Autographed paperbacks, updates and info about live author appearances:

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LIONS and TIGERS and TEENS:

*Expert advice and support for the
conscientious parent just like you*

Myrna Beth Haskell



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***This book is dedicated to
the teenagers in my life,
Trevor and Skye.
You have brought
me great joy!***

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Chapter 30: Beating Bullies

EVEN THOUGH it was over thirty years ago, I remember this incident quite clearly. A gang of delinquent boys had been terrorizing female students in the junior high school hallways by giving their rear ends a squeeze as they walked by. It was quite the news story among the female students. I honestly don't remember what the administration did about it, but I do remember when I personally experienced the violation.

I was in the seventh grade. The hallways had just recently been emptied by the late bell. As I hurried toward homeroom, soaked from the rain, I could hear footsteps behind me. Call it instinct, but I knew one of these delinquents was behind me. When he squeezed me from behind, everything became surreal. Without thinking, I swung my arm around and bopped him hard on the head with my umbrella. This creepy looking fellow, who probably should have moved on to high school long before, had a surprisingly shocked expression on his face. As he held his head, he started to laugh. At the time, I was glad that he thought it was funny because my arm had

moved before my brain had cautioned, “Not a good idea.” Just then, my homeroom teacher appeared in the doorway, and the bully quickly ran down the hall.

I felt good that I had defended myself, but I was worried that he would retaliate the next day. Luckily for me, he decided to let it go. His friends had not witnessed the confrontation, and he probably respected me for having some spunk.

Most bullying, however, is not merely a single incident that goes unnoticed with little effect on the victim. Prolonged and harmful bullying occurs every day in American schools. Fortunately, the adult response is quite different today than it was thirty years ago due to an increased awareness of the harmful and long-term effects of bullying.

Bullying is Serious Business

According to results found in “Student Reports of Bullying and Cyber-Bullying: Results From the 2009 School Crime Supplement to the National Crime Victimization Survey,” a study published by the National Center for Education Statistics, “About twenty-eight percent of students ages twelve through eighteen reported they were bullied at school.” Even more alarming was the finding that teen students who were victims of bullying were much more

likely to bring a weapon to school than students who were not subjected to bullying.

Cyberbullying has increased tremendously over the last decade with the explosion of numbers of teens using online social networks and texting. Tina George, Regional Coordinator of Student Assistance Program Services for Caron Treatment Centers (which provide outreach to schools in New England and the Mid Atlantic), warns, “Cyberbullying is becoming more prevalent and more damaging. The cyber world allows for teens to be bullied twenty-four hours a day and seven days a week. Additionally, teens who are being cyberbullied are even more reluctant to tell their parents because they fear their parents will take away or monitor their devices.”

Despite increased awareness, some school administrators are still reluctant to hold perpetrators accountable, and some parents still consider bullying a part of growing up. Teens need to learn to handle uncomfortable social situations. However, there is a distinct difference between “teasing” and “bullying,” and bullying can spiral out of control quickly and cause long-lasting damage to a teen’s self esteem. In 2008, studies conducted by researchers at Yale School of Medicine found that child and adolescent bullying victims were two to nine times more likely to report suicidal thoughts than those who hadn’t been bullied.

Boiling Points and Warning Signs

The document, “Best Practices in Bullying Prevention and Intervention,” published by the US Department of Health and Human Services, states, “Bullying is aggressive behavior that is intentional and that involves an imbalance of power or strength. Often, it is repeated over time and can take many forms. In many respects, research on bullying prevention is still in its infancy.”

Tina George instructs parents to be proactive. “Parents can determine if their child could potentially become a victim of bullying prior to an incident occurring.” She says there are general characteristics that are prevalent in targeted victims. “Teens who are more cautious, sensitive, insecure or withdrawn than their peers tend to be targets of bullies.” George advises parents to seek opportunities to allow their teens to assert themselves and to encourage group activities to improve social interaction.

Even self-assured teens or those who have a good support system at home can become victims. Unfortunately, teenage victims of bullying often remain silent. They might be so mortified that they keep their misery private. They might also be afraid to seek adult assistance because they feel they’ll appear weak or that reporting might escalate the situation. Therefore, parents need to be in tune with their teen’s moods and behaviors. The following is a list of

behaviors that may indicate that your teen is a victim of bullying:

- Creates excuses to avoid going to school
- Abrupt drop in grades
- No longer has contact with a certain group of friends
- Loss of appetite
- Requests different transportation to school (i.e. asks to be driven to school when he used to take the bus)
- Comes home from school with damaged clothing or belongings
- Suddenly avoids using the computer or cell phone

Interventions

In March 2011, National PTA launched an initiative called “Connect for Respect” to encourage PTAs across the country to lead conversations in their school communities about bullying and to develop a collaborative approach to finding solutions that work.

What Parents Can Do:

Parents need to talk to their teens on a regular basis about how things are going at school. If they are suspicious that their teen is being bullied at school, they should contact school personnel. Parents also need to raise their children

so that they don't become the perpetrators. Starting at a very young age, parents should teach their children that bullying is hurtful and unacceptable.

George advises, "If your teen is being bullied, make sure that you notify the school, even if your teen tells you that he told someone. A parent should ask what steps the school is taking to address the issue." She counsels parents to follow up in writing to ensure that everyone is on the same page in case you need to take additional steps to protect your teen. Parents should be prepared to contact the police if necessary.

Some communities offer victim support groups or programs that focus on assertiveness skills training. George explains, "This is a skill that takes practice and encouragement for some students. Finding a safe place to work on these skills can be empowering."

It is imperative that parents intervene when teasing escalates to bullying. Most importantly, teens need to know they are not alone.

What Schools Can Do:

Many schools have implemented bullying prevention programs. If your teen's school does not have a program in place, George suggests that parents work with the school's PTA to raise funds for a quality program that will help

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educate students and staff. The following is a list of steps that schools can take to set the right tone and to encourage an anti-bullying environment:

- Establish a committee composed of administrators, teachers, bus drivers, parents and students to develop policies that clearly define and enforce unacceptable behavior.
- Provide lessons on anger management, problem solving, and conflict resolution
- Hire an ample number of hallway and lunch monitors
- Involve Student Council
- Develop student mentor programs that involve older students working with younger students
- Provide peer mediation programs monitored by school staff. Teens are usually more comfortable discussing and working out their problems with peers.

TIPS and TALES

“My daughter is a Safe School Ambassador for our district. The school chooses students who are known and respected by their peers in the school community and trains them to use non violent communication and intervention skills to diffuse bullying situations. Our Safe School Ambassadors also meet with ambassadors from other schools. This program is helping.” — Christina Castelonia — Cornwall, NY

“I was a school nurse for years. I would ask school personnel to send both the perpetrator and the victim down to my office. I would expect the bully take responsibility by helping me take care of the victim. This was definitely a deterrent for the bully because it got known around the school that I requested this.” — Pat Woodruff – Keene, NH

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“We use a systems change model for maintaining a positive school climate called PBIS (Positive Behavior Interventions & Supports). The PBIS team consists of teachers, counselors, parents, support staff, and sometimes students. The school develops effective responses to problem behaviors (including bullying) with a focus on prevention. We use the mantra “RISE Above” (R-Respect, I-Inspire, S-Safe, E-Excel). Students are recognized when they meet our expectations. They can win t-shirts and other items.” — Matthew Latvis — principal at Haviland Middle School, Hyde Park, NY

Afterword

COMMON PARENTISMS... and the answers your teens are thinking, not saying!

Parentism: If your friends were jumping off a bridge would you?

Teen Answer: Yes!

Parentism: Do as I say, not as I do.

Teen Answer: Are you kidding me?

Parentism: I'll put you back where you came from!

Teen Answer: Not doable.

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Parentism: You call that dancing?

Teen Answer: No...grinding.

Parentism: This hurts me more than it hurts
you.

Teen Answer: No, it doesn't.

Parentism: Do I look stupid or something?

Teen Answer: Yup, pretty much.

Parentism: I walked three miles to school...up
hill

Teen Answer: And donkeys fly.

Parentism: My mother would have slapped my
face if I said that.

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Teen Answer: Is that why your jaw is crooked?

Parentism: Eating candy will cause your teeth to fall out.

Teen Answer: Why are yours still in then?

Parentism: You're not going out in that, are you?

Teen Answer: No. I'm just practicing walking to the door.

Parentism: If you know what's good for you...

Teen Answer: I do. But, it's definitely different from your version.

Parentism: Because I said so!

Teen Answer: When is the last time I listened to what you said?

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Parentism: How many times do I have to tell you?

Teen Answer: Probably thousands...or until I'm 21.

Parentism: I hope someday you'll have a kid just like you.

Teen Answer: Me too!

Parentism: As long as you live under my roof, you'll follow my rules.

Teen Answer: That's why I plan to get out as soon as possible.

Parentism: I don't care what the other parents are letting their kids do.

Teen Answer: I do.

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Parentism: What part of 'no' don't you understand?

Teen Answer: All of it.

Parentism: This is your last warning.

Teen Answer: Nope. It's the eight thousandth.

Parentism: Money doesn't grow on trees.

Teen Answer: I know. It grows in your wallet.

Parentism: When I was your age...

Teen Answer: It's obvious you were never my age!

About the Book

LIONS and TIGERS and TEENS is a compilation of the best installments of Myrna Haskell's popular, syndicated column for parents of teens, teachers, siblings, grandparents... or anyone who interacts with today's youth. Also included are several installments that have never before been published, now available exclusively to readers of this promising new book from Unlimited Publishing LLC.

This guide is a lighthearted journey through the ups and downs of raising teenagers. But it also provides serious, practical advice, brimming with tips from dozens of experts in the field.

In addition, real-life lessons from more than 100 everyday parents and teens are shared, showing you what works in practice, as well as theory. Readers are invited to submit their own "Tips & Tales" at <http://www.myrnahaskell.com> for possible future publication.

The book covers a wide range of universal topics that parents of teenagers face, such as how to handle a teen's first time behind the wheel; how to deal with lying; setting and enforcing curfews; and many more issues commonly faced by teens and those who care for them.

About the Author

Myrna Haskell's column, *LIONS and TIGERS and TEENS*, debuted in June 2009. It is currently published in 15 states and has a monthly circulation of approximately 500,000.

Her decision to stay home with two children has not deterred her writing career. Her work has also appeared in "Better Homes and Gardens" (Meredith Publications), "PARENTS Magazine" (Gruner & Jahr) and "American Fitness" (AFAA). She has also been published in more than 150 regional print magazines, Web magazines, and journals throughout the United States and Canada. Please visit her site at <http://www.myrnahaskell.com> to learn more.