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Acknowledgements

This revision of *Active Parenting of Teens*, like its predecessor, is based largely on the theories of Alfred Adler and Rudolf Dreikurs, two of the truly great psychological thinkers of the 20th Century. Their principles and methods have proven effective with millions of parents and educators, and the field of parent education is greatly in their debt. Where I have extended these theories and methods, I tread lightly with the utmost respect for their genius and contribution.

To complement the Adlerian base of this program I have included work derived from communication theorists such as Tom Gordon, Carl Rogers, and Robert Carkuff. The combination of such empathy training with Adlerian parenting methods represents a very powerful parenting model that can be taught to all parents living in a democratic society. The *Active Parenting of Teens* program, along with its companion program *Active Parenting Now* (for parents of children five to twelve), have been used successfully by more than three million parents in countries all over the world since 1983.

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We also gathered the input of families nationwide, who wrote to us about their daily conflicts. Their lives became the basis of our vignettes. Active Parenting class leaders provided invaluable feedback from parents in their classes. Their support of parent education is lived every day in hundreds of behind-the-scenes ways.

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Michael Popkin, Atlanta, 2008

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Overview

This program is a video-based, interactive learning experience. It works best when the facilitator leads a workshop with a small group of parents or caregivers of teens or preteens (approximately 10-20 in a group). The program is composed of six sessions, each two hours long. Note that Session 4 may run long. You may choose to allow two and a half hours for this session or save some of that session’s material for Session 6, which is a shorter class.

Parents receive information during each session through four mediums: group discussion, practice activities, video, and the *Parent’s Guide*.

- The leader introduces topics to the group through group discussion and reinforces them through practice activities as directed in the *Leader’s Guide*.
- In the video, the narrator expands on and reinforces these topics, and actors demonstrate skills by modeling behaviors in a family setting.
- Skills are then further reinforced in the *Parent’s Guide*, which parents read during class and at home. Each parent should have a *Parent’s Guide* of his or her own to receive the full benefits of the program.

The program teaches parents a comprehensive model for parenting teens and preteens. As a “model” it contains much more than just information and skills, including:

- An understanding of the purpose of parenting in a democratic society.
- A rationale for choosing the authoritative (“Active”) style of parenting instead of more autocratic or permissive models.
- An understanding and application of recent brain research on teen development.
- An emphasis on character development as a means of equipping teens to survive and thrive, with special emphasis on the qualities of courage, cooperation, respect, responsibility, and self-esteem.
- The parenting skills necessary for developing these qualities in teens while at the same time handling behavior problems and enhancing family satisfaction. These skills include discipline, communication, problem solving, family enrichment, and encouragement.
- An explanation of how to apply this model to the goal of prevention in the areas of drugs (including alcohol and tobacco), sexuality, and violence.

Once parents begin their educational journey, they are likely to want additional information, so have additional resources available, including follow-up groups and programs.

About This Edition of Active Parenting of Teens

The original *Active Parenting of Teens* program was published in 1990, followed by a revised version in 1998. Between these two editions, *Active Parenting of Teens* has been used successfully by more than a million parents throughout the world in parent education groups. Far more parents have seen the video library versions of the programs in their own homes or through television broadcasts or on loan from a parent resource library. The response has been overwhelmingly positive. Thousands of leaders have written us about their successes using the program, helping parents reevaluate their parenting methods and discovering that their teens respond with improved attitude and behavior.