

Foreword

I am delighted to add my comments to this fabulous resource. Every teacher and parent can relate to the teen years because they've been there. As a teen growing up in the '60s, I was awkward, fearful, excited, risk taking, and cocky but mostly just happy to survive. My grades were all over the place; you would have thought I had multiple personalities attending school under assumed names—it was truly such a crazy time. I was delighted when Dr. Sheryl Feinstein suggested this book and even more so when it became part of my library. I am now pleased to announce that a second edition is being offered, updating everyone on the latest research and strategies for the teenage brain. As a former teenager, you'll relate to so much of this book. If you are the parent of teens, you'll really enjoy it!

When I was a teen, I needed structure but wanted independence. I loved doing risky things even though they rarely paid off. The teachers I had who really cared sure got my attention. For example, my sixth-grade and eighth-grade English teachers were very personable. As a result, I not only worked harder for them, they became role models for me. Years later, I ended up teaching middle school English. There's quite a bit of power in the appropriate role model at the right time in one's life!

What makes adolescents so different from the adults they would become and from the children they used to be? The list of various culprits we've pinpointed is a long one: hormones, rebellious nature, youthful exuberance, and plain old immaturity are among the favorites. No one expected, however, that the teen brain was keeping secrets—and big ones!

Who knew that the teen brain was still growing? Scientists have assumed until just recently that the brain was mostly finished growing in childhood and left it at that. New achievements in brain-imaging technology, especially functional MRIs, finally enabled neuroscientists to look inside the heads of teens and check it out. What they saw took everyone by surprise—the adolescent brain is a hotbed of activity. Even more shocking was the discovery that the brain keeps developing at least into the twenties.

These findings reveal a whole new perspective on the role of secondary education. Teens are neither “big children” practicing to be adults nor are they “adults with a smaller brain”! Rather, they bring different interests and expectations to the classroom. Educators are just starting to view them as a unique group. *Secrets of the Teenage Brain* investigates the neurological and biological changes that teenagers experience. In each chapter are new facts and research findings that topple assumptions we’ve held about teenagers as well as a comprehensive list of strategies teachers can use with adolescent students.

The second edition of *Secrets of the Teenage Brain* expands our knowledge on the teenage brain, including cutting-edge research and fresh strategies. Special features include technology and the brain, students with ADHD (attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder), steroid use, and violence and aggression, giving new perspectives to contemporary issues. I must admit, one of my favorite additions to this book is the book club discussion questions. They are a wonderful way to bring educators together for meaningful dialogue; I can’t wait for the conversation to begin.

Hopefully, you’ll enjoy learning why teens act like they do; no matter what, you’ll definitely see them in a new light when you are done! *Secrets of the Teenage Brain* will reveal the exciting answers to the tantalizing secrets that have eluded educators ever since teenagers have been going to school. As a mother of teens, the author, Dr. Feinstein, also brings quite a bit of firsthand knowledge to these pages. Her experience combined with science should reveal to you, well, the *Secrets of the Teenage Brain!*

—Eric Jensen

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