

# teentalk

BECOME A TEEN  
WITH **RESILIENCE,**  
**PASSION AND**  
**PURPOSE**

by

**Sharon Witt**

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**Teen Talk – become a teen with passion and purpose**

Book 1 of the 'Teen Talk' series

Revised and updated edition

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THIS BOOK BELONGS TO AN

**INCREDIBLE  
TEEN**

SAMPLE

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SAMPLE

To Mum and Dad  
You did an amazing job  
I am grateful for everything x

# HELLO TEEN!

I'M SO GLAD YOU'RE HERE

## **Being a teenager can be, without doubt, a very tricky time.**

When you are right in the thick of it, life can feel so confusing. I called this book **Teen Talk** because I think we can always use some helpful advice from people who have gone before us.

If you are reading this book, chances are you are a young person about to enter this very exciting, yet perhaps daunting stage of your life. Maybe you are right in the thick of it, and perhaps need a little guidance. Whatever stage you are at, this book is for you, written as a guide to help you navigate through to the other side of your teenage journey.

No one ever said being a teenager was easy! For some people, it can be a relatively straightforward transition in life. For others, it can be an absolute minefield of emotions, physical changes, confusion, and a whole new set of responsibilities. It probably feels like such a short time ago that you were just a kid with not too many responsibilities or pressures.

**Teen Talk** is more than a survival tool. I want you to thrive.

In this book, we'll chat about the power of setting goals, building your resilience, believing in your dreams, navigating friendships and tricky conversations, why making mistakes are not the end of the world (rather an opportunity to do better). Most importantly, I'm going to talk about how you WILL come out the other side of your teenage years, hopefully with a brilliant toolkit of ideas and strategies.

To you, the young person that is holding this book in your hands right now, thank you for trusting me to read this. You may not enjoy reading at all, (maybe this is the FIRST book you have ever read!) or maybe you

cannot wait to get stuck into these pages. Whoever you are, I believe you have been given this book for a **reason**.

**A quick note from me** – you don't need to read this book like you would a fiction book – chapter by chapter in order. You can read any chapter you feel like, or you may like to read it front to back.

It might be one chapter, one page or one paragraph that speaks to you and encourages you in your journey through adolescence. It's not always easy or smooth sailing. But you've got this. I believe in you and wherever you are at right now. YOU are capable of so much more than you probably even believe. I am grateful that you are reading this.

On another note – I hereby give you permission to **WRITE** in this book. It would be a great idea to have a highlighter and pen or pencil as you read. Highlight any of the 'aha' moments, where you read something and think to yourself – 'YES! I need to remember this'. You'll also find some space that gives you the opportunity to pause, reflect and write some ideas of your own. Don't worry if you're not a writer – no one is going to be checking your spelling. 😊

Ready? Let's go...

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SAMPLE

# A WORK IN PROGRESS

SAMPLE

# UNDER CONSTRUCTION

I think every teenager should have a sign across their forehead with the words 'Under Construction!' (I'm only joking here, but seriously – it would certainly remind you and the adults in your life to remember that *teenagering* (Yes, I think I just made this word up!) is all new to you and you are doing the best you can with what you know right now.

Your teen years are a significant time of change and development, both physically and mentally. Research has shown that during your adolescent years, your brain undergoes a process of rewiring and reorganisation, as well as continued growth and maturation. This process continues right into your adult years – and your brain doesn't reach full maturity until your mid to late twenties! (I know, right!)

One of the main areas of your brain that is undergoing significant development is what is known as the **prefrontal cortex**. This part of your brain is responsible for skills like planning, prioritising, controlling impulses and high order thinking. This might be helpful for you to understand as it explains why teens often get a bad rap for making silly decisions without thinking them through. Hello! Our brains are still rewiring and working out new pathways. It's not easy.

The **Limbic System**, which is responsible for emotions, also develops rapidly during adolescence. This means you may experience intense emotions and have difficulty regulating them at times. I want you to remember that your brain is still developing, and that's why it is important to make healthy choices during these years to support your brain's healthy development.

As you move through these important years of being a teenager, I would encourage you to remember that this is also a time of huge growth – not just for your brain, but also your body. You may very likely

experience times of confusion, overwhelm, and just plain exhaustion. This is perfectly normal. You are experiencing a high growth stage so it's important to offer yourself some grace when needed. You'll make mistakes, poor decisions, at times, and wish you could take some choices back. However, it's all a part of the process of developing into an amazing young adult.



# YOU ONLY KNOW WHAT YOU KNOW

WHEN WE KNOW BETTER, WE DO BETTER.


When I was a teenager, I used to go to the beach with my best gal friends. These are some of the best memories I have from my teen years. We would make the two-hour trek to a gorgeous beach, find our favourite spot for the day on the sand and lay out our beach towels, ready to begin a day of sun 'baking.'

We would take out our bottles of tanning oil and lather ourselves all over so that we had the best chance of our skin going from light to very dark by the time we returned home at sundown. Way back then, there was no information about being sun smart or protecting our skin from the sun's harmful rays. All we knew was that laying out under the hot sun for hours and hours (with the occasional jump in the ocean to cool ourselves) would result in our skin going dark, and more often than not – sunburnt!

What followed could be days of blistering skin and requiring us to apply countless layers of moisturising cream to our sunburnt bodies. Ouch!

We had no idea back then, prolonged exposure to the harsh sun without sunscreen with SPF would perhaps lead to skin cancers and long-term damage to our skin – many years later.

Now that we have been educated about applying sunscreen to our skin before we are exposed to the sun (slip, slop, slap) and the importance of wearing a hat, we can make more informed and positive choices.



There are going to be many occasions during the next few years, and beyond, where you will make choices based on the information you have at the time. And you won't always make the right decisions. Because you may not know better at the time.

I love the phrase, ***“when we know better, we do better.”***

This can be applied to many aspects of your life – whether that be dealing with tricky friendships, difficult choices online, sleep, health, or working with others.

So, when you make mistakes or silly choices, try and give yourself a little extra grace, and make a note to do better next time.

Oh, and don't forget to use sunscreen. 😊

**“When we know better,  
we do better.”**



# BE YOU



"Be yourself, everyone else  
is already taken."

Oscar Wilde

There were two versions of me at one stage when I was growing up, all because of a TV show I adored.

The show was a soapie called *A Country Practice* (way back in the 1980s before you were even born) and was very popular. Leading the way was one of the stars, 'Molly'. She was a confident, gorgeous woman who was often outspoken, and stood up for what she believed in. She dressed in bright colours and wore amazing, wacky, bright outfits. Molly, the character, eventually died. That episode was viewed by millions of Australians, as they watched a most-loved character fade from our screens.

In front of one TV screen was me, tears rolling down my cheeks, thinking how much I wanted to be 'Molly'.

That girl I loved on TV – Molly – affected my dress sense, big time! I remember begging my Nan to sew for me a replica of a bright jumpsuit that Molly wore. I even put 'Molly's' bright clips in my hair. (The mental images frighten me to this day!)

Sure, I went around dressed as 'Molly' for a while, but it wasn't the real me. I was just trying to copy someone else I admired.

The truth is, there is only one you on the whole face of the earth – how incredible is that!? Being created as a unique and amazing individual lets you off the hook straight away. You don't have to try and be anybody else



but yourself. Actress Judy Garland – the girl who played Dorothy in *The Wizard of Oz* – once said:

*Always be a first-rate version of yourself,  
instead of a second-rate version of someone else.*

Social media, advertising, magazines, and other forms of media constantly bombard us with images (mostly fake or digitally enhanced) that pressure us to look or act a certain way. We could easily end up becoming look-alikes of each other. How boring would that be?!

Fashions and trends may come and go. Don't just buy something or wear an outfit because you are trying to be someone you are not. You'll just end up being very uncomfortable because you're not being real to yourself. Be strong and brave enough to be authentically you, not a copy of someone else. You will feel the best about yourself and your appearance when you are **comfortably** being you. Don't allow yourself to be pressured into being anyone other than who you really are.

Who you are is **ENOUGH**. Remember that!

# THE COMPARISON TRAP

DON'T COMPARE YOURSELF USING SOMEONE ELSE'S RULER

The popularity of social media has made life more complex by giving us a glimpse into the lives of countless individuals, many of whom we've never met in person. This constant exposure can lead us to make unhelpful comparisons between our own experiences, and the curated, idealised versions of others' lives that are presented on social media.

Have you ever fallen into the trap of constantly checking what others are doing, following their passion and purpose, wishing you could do that too?

I know I have, and I think we'd all be lying to ourselves if we said we'd never experienced a tinge of jealousy watching someone else truly in their element, pursuing their passion.

We have all been created with unlimited potential, and we all have our own unique gifts and talents.

And you can't run someone else's race! You must run your own.

One of my past students has the most incredible passion for carving and sculpting amazing creations using a chainsaw. His creations are literally breathtaking and have won numerous awards all over the world. His tools – a tree log and a chainsaw! Another past student has the most incredible business as a pastry chef, and literally creates the most original and breathtaking cakes that blow my mind. When she was a student, she didn't always find her school studies easy, and I'm sure she would admit now, it was a challenging time for her. When she discovered her passion and gift of creating cakes, she truly began to shine, and she is now a highly sought-after baker.

"Comparison is  
the thief of  
joy."  
Theodore Roosevelt

You can check them out here on Instagram:

@Bkcarving

@littleredpatisserie

I know of others who are talented singer-songwriters, photographers, web designers, early childhood teachers... you get the idea.

I encourage you to focus on your own strengths and talents. The world needs diversity, and if we all had the same talents and area of expertise, it would be kind of boring. So, shine your light in your own special way and celebrate what you do well. Identify your own strengths and capitalise them.

**Sing your own song, not someone else's.**



**TEEN TALK TRUTH**

Most images you see on social media are the result of someone taking hundreds of shots, applying the best filters and lighting, editing the entire image before FINALLY uploading that one image. Don't compare your real life to an image that is not even real.



*Let's just go ahead and be what we were made to be without enviously or pridefully comparing ourselves with each other, or trying to be 'something we aren't.*  
Romans 12:6 (MSG)

# GET REAL!

THE REAL YOU IS AMAZING, LOVABLE, A TRUE DIAMOND

"You are you.  
Now, isn't that pleasant?"

Dr Seuss

Have you ever looked closely at a diamond? (most people haven't!) When they have been cut and shaped, and polished into the final piece, they are truly remarkable. However, a diamond doesn't start off all shiny and sparkly – we only ever see the result after a lot of work has gone into cleaning it up.

We need a bit of that clean and polish as well. Sometimes we need to rub away at the surface to enable our own unique diamond to shine.

At birth, you are not unlike a unique diamond, a true star who can achieve great things. As we get older, it's easy to forget that we must rub away some of the charcoal to find the true gem!

The truth is, there are going to be challenges you face throughout your teen years (perhaps you've already gone through quite a few already.) Whether that be failing a test, dealing with bullying, navigating school with a learning challenge, or maybe perhaps you live with an illness. As we go through life experiences, face them head-on and navigate through them, we continue to rub away the surface and clean away the dirt, exposing who we really are – an amazing, unique diamond.

"We must rub away some  
of the charcoal  
to find the true gem."



# ON BEING YOU

*'I didn't belong as a kid and that always bothered me. If only I'd known that one day my differentness would be an asset, Then my early life would have been much easier.'*  
Bette Midler

*'Never dull your shine for somebody else.'*  
Tyra Banks

*'Start treating yourself as if you're the most important asset you'll ever have. After all, aren't you?'*  
Anonymous

*'To be yourself in a world that is constantly trying to make you something else is the greatest achievement.'*  
Ralph Waldo Emerson

*'To shine your brightest light is to be who you truly are.'*  
Roy T Bennett

*'When you are content to be simply yourself and don't compare or compete, everyone will respect you.'*  
Lao Tzu

*'Just be yourself, there is no one better.'*  
Taylor Swift

*'Being yourself is all it takes. If you want to impress someone don't be someone else, just be yourself.'*  
Selena Gomez

*'Those who have a strong sense of love and belonging have the courage to be imperfect.'*  
Brene Brown