



**Being a Teen: Everything Teen Girls & Boys
Should Know About Relationships, Sex, Love,
Health, Identity & More**

Jane Fonda

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NEW YORK TIMES BESTSELLER • AN ALL-ENCOMPASSING GUIDE THAT PARENTS WILL WANT FOR THEIR TEENS

This thorough, concise guide offers straight talk about:

- The male and female body as it changes and matures.
- Teen relationships: what it takes to create happy, supportive, positive, and meaningful connections with family, friends, and others.
- Identity empowerment: how to be authentic and thrive in today's world.
- Sex and sexuality for boys and girls: how teens should take care of their bodies, embrace their experiences, and strengthen self-esteem.
- Strategies for working through the toughest challenges, including bullying, sexual abuse, eating disorders, pregnancy, and more.

Praise for *Being a Teen*

“A frank and candid resource for adolescents.”—*People*

“Fonda’s warmth and love for the teen community is evident.”—*Publishers Weekly*

“Clear, practical, and riveting, *Being a Teen* cuts away at myth, enhances teens’ self-esteem, and arms them with a trove of useful information. Beautifully organized . . . Any parent, teacher, coach, or doctor needs to read this authoritative guide. What a lifesaver for our boys and girls!”—**William S. Pollack, PhD, author of the international bestseller *Real Boys* and Associate Clinical Professor, Department of Psychiatry at Harvard Medical School**

“*Being a Teen* should be in the hands of every teen in the world. It is a myth-busting, fact-filled treasure full of life information all teens want and need to know.”—**Christiane Northrup, M.D., *New York Times* bestselling author of *Women’s Bodies, Women’s Wisdom***

“Clear, unflinching, and nonjudgmental . . . a reliable guide to the turbulent physical and social transitions of adolescence.”—**Michael Kimmel, Distinguished Professor of Sociology and Gender Studies, Stony Brook University, and author of *Guyland***

“A comprehensive, honest, fun-to-read book for today’s teenagers. This delightful book will be used again and again.”—**The Reverend Debra W. Haffner, president, Religious Institute, and author of *From Diapers to Dating***

“Detailed, accurate and practical . . . an excellent resource.”—**Paul Kivel, author of *Boys Will Be Men***

Being a Teen: Everything Teen Girls & Boys Should Know About Relationships, Sex, Love, Health, Identity & More Details

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From Reader Review Being a Teen: Everything Teen Girls & Boys Should Know About Relationships, Sex, Love, Health, Identity & More for online ebook

YALibrarian says

Okay, full disclosure here: I didn't read the whole thing. Nor did I *want* to pick up this book. My experience is that anything advertised with "teens" in the title is either an adult perspective trying to force some terrible ideology on the creatures they consider teenagers or just a terribly dumbed-down how-to. **THIS BOOK IS NEITHER!** In fact, it's quite informative. So much so, that it deserves noting that the drawings and diagrams are much more graphic than expected (but very useful...)! But, all things considered, the information is spot on, medically informed and so not judge-y at all. Fonda has included information about everything that we know that's out there and the table of contents allows you to easily browse for exactly what you might be curious about--this is part of why I didn't actually read it all and just paged through. I'm an adult so I don't need to be reminded of everything that happened during puberty...I was there already. This is an awesomely helpful book. It's well organized, factual, and a great quick reference.

Jessica says

I didn't think this book was going to have much to teach me, and it didn't, but I did learn that masturbation is sometimes referred to as "pillow- or bed-humping" so I look forward to using that phrase to mortify my future hypothetical children during our frank sex talks.

This book was decent - my meh rating is mostly for my 1) distrust of celebrity authors and 2) my confusion about the audience for this book. The tone was very earnest in a way that cynical teenager me would have found offensive, and in some parts it was like "this is how you pronounce ejaculation" and then it was like "Just remember, many other high schoolers like you haven't had sex" (these are not actual quotes - I returned my copy to the library right away because 26 (!!!) people were waiting for it). I suppose it wasn't meant to be read like a novel. And that I am taking my kind of okay sex ed in school for granted (we at least learned about ejaculation).

Anyway, it covered a lot of ground, and not just the mechanics of sex, but also the anguish of teenager-hood, which I appreciated.

Kira says

read this to see if it would be okay for my daughters... have passed the book to my 11 soon to be 2 year old.

Radiolab says

Radiolab asked listeners for their sex ed recommendations.

Rebecca, a Radiolab listener, says, "When my son (age 9 at the time) was worried that his penis was not "normal," we consulted this book. There were several penis drawings and the message was "All these penises are normal." When my teenage daughter showed interest in boys, we read about sex and birth control, but also read about boys and their development. The writing style is plain, and so easily understood. There is no bias as to what is right or wrong. This book made my kids comfortable about asking questions - there was nothing scary in the information it provided. I downloaded this book onto both of their devices so they could consult it at any time."

Wendy says

This book provides lots of information about a lot of different topics. Seems like it will be a good jumping off point for discussions with my teen. I'd recommend it to parents/high school students.

Cheryl Cameron says

Great read if you have anything to do with middle school students!

Ivana Books Are Magic says

Very well written and informative. I made a decision to read more non-fiction this year and this book was a pretty good start up. It is not terribly in-depth, but it does cover some important points concerning teenage mental & physical health. I obviously I can't speak about it from a perspective of a teenager (because I'm plus thirty myself), but I read it as someone who might recommend it to a teen sooner or later. Would I recommend it to every teen? Probably not, as it is somewhat culture specific (some countries have been sexual education that others), but all in all, I think it is a pretty good and useful resource book.

You probably all know who Jane Fonda is, but you might be curious/ or uncertain about her reasons for writing a book like this. Most of us bookworms tend to be a bit on fence when it comes to celebrity books (and for a good reason). However, Jane Fonda has actually been involved in working (volunteering) for better adolescent & teenage mental and physical health for years (she even founded a foundation for it), so she has something to contribute to this topic. Quality volunteer work & activism is certainly reason enough for writing a book. Not only does Fonda's reason for writing this book make sense to me, her voice also sounds authentic.

I haven't checked it up yet, but if I understood well, Fonda claims that the work of her foundation decreased the number of teenage pregnancies, so if that is true kudos to her. Naturally, just because someone is famous, doesn't mean that he or she is automatically truly influential in all aspects, but generally speaking, using your popularity to educate people is not such a bad idea. Truth be told, I feel like people tend to see celebrities as more influential than they truly are. While celebrities do have a great marketing power and have repeatedly proved themselves a good investment for product placement, most celebrities aren't taken very seriously. Being famous can be a double-edged sword in that sense.

I approached this book without any negative prejudice, though. Ages ago, I watched one cancer themed interview with Jane Fonda and she struck me as a very educated and eloquent lady. So, I pretty much got

from I expected from this book. I agree with Jane Fonda in the sense that talking about sexuality with young ones does not mean that we're promoting promiscuity or early sexual intercourse. Learning about sexuality doesn't have to be connected with promoting unhealthy or unwise life choices. It is important to create a climate in which teens would feel comfortable asking questions that are bothering them. It is quite possible that books like this can help with that.

Education is power. One could even go so far to say, that it is our duty as adults to give an educated answer on this sensitive matter to youth. You may not think you will get these kind of questions (especially if you don't work in education or don't have or don't plan to have kids) but unless you're from Mars, you never know when a younger sibling/relative or random teen might ask you a sensitive question. Growing up isn't easy, and body changes can be quite confusing so it is good to remind ourselves about that. I personally hate to see puberty being presented as some kind of disease, because obviously it is not only a natural process, but basically a crucial part of growing up. Teenage years, as confusing as they can be, are when we are supposed to really start developing our personality and identity. To say that this time period is important is an understatement. The less scared our youth is, the more educated it becomes, the better it is for everyone.

The information covered in *Being a Teen* is pretty standard, there is nothing revolutionary about it. I wouldn't say that it is everything that teen girls and boys should know about relationships, sex, love, health, identity & more (as the title implies), but it is a good place to start. I genuinely think it is a pretty good book and I do like how it also focuses on mental health because that is important as well.

Nevertheless, I do have a few issues with this book. Personally, I think that the chapter about contraception could have been better written. In addition, saying that abortion is completely safe is a bit of a stretch. I think young woman and woman in particular need to know that there are health risks involved in abortions. Abortions should be seen as a last resort and should not be considered a method of contraception. Not that this book says that (it does stress that a day after pill is a much better solution), but still it seems to fly over this topic a bit too lightly. I just think a bit more should be said about it.

Not because abortions are morally wrong (I won't even get into that), but because are surgical procedures and they do involve bleeding. Yes, the risks may be called minimal but they exist. I understand that in some cases abortions are needed, justified or recommended, but down playing what they really is intellectually dishonest. A girl needs to know that she needs to get some rest after an abortion, perhaps even adjust her diet to make up for the blood loss. Plus, she should know that she can seek counseling if she needs to. For most woman and men, abortion is emotionally difficult so that is something that needs to be taken into consideration.

Similarly, the pill has its health consequences as well. There has to be a way to educate youth about using the pill, without promoting it is a 100% safe. Nothing chemical that you put into your body is 100 % safe. Tiny print matters too. I'm all for educating young ones about contraception, but the education has to be complete. It should involve reading the tiny print as well. Furthermore, as long as this theme is discussed one should repeatedly stress that the pill offers absolutely no protection against sexually transmitted disease. This book does say that but if I remember well, not nearly often enough for my liking.

The pill has long been advertised as something that empowers women, but I can't help but feeling that it puts all the contraception pressure & responsibility on one gender and that is just seems unfair. Furthermore, some claims made in this book don't ring 100% true or complete to me, but still, I believe it is an useful reference book. There is nothing completely inaccurate about the information presented (as far as I remember), it is just that are some things that aren't explained fully.

Another thing that comes to my mind, is that I strongly disagree with the assumption (put forward in this book) that MTV shows about teen mums are a good or a realistic representation of teen pregnancies. Guys, you don't want to be getting your information from MTV. There is a big or better to say an enormous difference between reality TV and documentary films. Reality TV is often scripted and hence an unrealistic representation of daily lives, plus it often hires professional actors and simply doesn't live up to standards of even a low quality documentary film. A documentary program/series/film made by professionals usually involves a significant amount of research and quite often also collaboration with specialist in the field. Reality TV is about creating the illusion of reality, acting out certain scenes from daily life, and then selling it as natural. Two completely different things.

Moving on the best part of the book (for me). The advice for victims of abuse or bullying seemed particularly well-written to me. Very much honest and to the point. Advice along the line 'If you are an under-aged person and have suffered any kind of abuse, know that it is not your fault and keep telling as many adults as you can' may seem obvious, but this is something that needs to be repeated. If a person has been bullied or abused, they might be tempted to feel that it is somehow their fault, or that telling might make it worse, so it is important to reassure them. This book basically sends this message to abused teens: 'even if it may seem to you, it is highly unlikely that adults will blame you for it' and that's a pretty good message.

To sum up, I think the chapters covering abuse, bullying and eating disorders are very relevant and up to the point. They acknowledge even the often not mentioned facts like for example that anorexia often happens to overachievers (it is a complex mental disease and not always connected with wanting to be a model) or that a parent might not in all cases react properly to the abuse claim made by a teenager (that is why telling as many adults as you can is important). These chapters even include website addresses and contacts for shelters and services that might help. Obviously, this is only applicable for residents of U.S.A but that's the target audience anyway. I would say that there is definitely room for improvement when it comes to Being a Teen, but it is a relevant book, and I for one am happy to have had read it. All in all, a very good book.

Melissa says

Not a bad book, I learned a few things myself. At parts, some of the text was like it was written for a child and not a teenager trying to figure things out. Read it to see if it was okay for my 12 year old daughter and then at the end i figured she could read it amd judge for herself if the chapter was something she wanted to read about or to skip to the next one.

DonutKnow says

Although I'm nearing the end to what is called 'teen years' I found bits and pieces of information that I don't think I was properly told about in school. I'm grateful to have read this book to learn more about the things I wish I knew in high school :)

Sexinthelibrary says

Jane Fonda is the famous actress, outspoken, politically active person you know. What qualifies her to write

a book on sexuality is the work she has maintained in her clinics, the Jane Fonda Centers for Adolescent Reproductive Health.

The book covers all the basics of anatomy, complete with pictures. It also covers standard teen questions about sexuality in a short answer, non-judgemental style. Nothing in depth here. She addresses, but not deeply, the GLBTQ question. If you are looking for that discussion, this is not for you.

Geared mainly toward girls, this is helpful for boys as well. However, there are many better books on the market, for example, *Safe Sex 101 : an overview for teens* by Margaret O. Hyde and Elizabeth H. Forsythe or *The What's Happening to My Body? Book for Boys* and *The "What's Happening to My Body? Book for Girls* by Lynda Madaras with Area Madaras

Amanda says

I bought this after hearing Cheryl Strayed say on the Dear Sugar podcast that she'd given it to her son, but wanted to pre-read it before giving it to my own son, to make sure I thought the info was relevant/useful/not a complete repeat of discussions we've already had.

As someone who grew up with pretty much zero information about sex and sexuality, in a house where 'sex' was considered a bad word, this book was a bit of a revelation for me. Granted, I now know almost all of the information in it, I found myself very moved by the honest, open, non-judgmental and warm presentation of facts. I wish - WISH - I'd had something like this as a young teen, it would have saved so many years of figuring things out the hard way, not knowing that I could say 'no', and generally not understanding the value of my body and heart. I highly recommend to parents of teens, regardless of how open you already are, because there's almost always a question they don't want to ask their parent. This book fills in the blanks.

Cori Weaver says

Genre: Informational

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Jane Fonda gives her take on all things that may be awkward and unsightly in young adult life. Even reading it after going through it, I gained more of an understanding for my own body and values. Great for students in middle school

Kaye says

Must read for young teens and their parents. Will gift it to my son now that I've read it. Frank language and covers all relevant topics for puberty aged youth.

Lisa says

Illustrated with drawings and complete with an index (so you can look up what you want to know and skip what you're not ready for) this clear, up front book about everything from how to dress to sexuality is WAY too mature for a school library, but as a resource purchased for the right girl, this subject matter is valuable.

Sojourner says

Being a Teen: Everything Teen Girls & Boys Should Know About Relationships, Sex, Love, Health, Identity & More by Jane Fonda is a timely and helpful guide which should be in the hands of every teen worldwide. Born December 21, 1937, the author Jane Fonda is a famous actress, writer, political activist, former fashion model, and fitness guru. She rose to fame in the 1960s with films such as Barbarella and Cat Ballou and is a household name worldwide. She is many things to many people and this all-encompassing guide for teens may come as a surprise to many.

What, however, is to be remembered at the heart of the book is genuine concern for young people. Jane Fonda has approached the subject with pragmatism which will be a huge boost for young readers who are gearing up for life. Her open and honest discussions about sex, relationships, self-esteem and other subjects are truly worth pondering. The book answers questions like "How do I know if I'm in a real relationship?", "How can I say 'no' and still be popular?" and "When is it okay to have sex?" In a world full of confusion, this book should open the eyes of many teens.

Being a Teen is not just about sex and relationship. It will also help teens to understand their bodies better. It has open and frank chapters which answer questions which many teens will feel awkward to ask others. Vast and exhaustive, it covers almost everything from identity to culture, relationship to sex, from body to their growth, from sexual abuse to family, from bullying to friends and much more. Talking about healthy relationship, Fonda writes: It is not a healthy relationship if there is abuse or pressure of any kind. You should not allow disrespectful language, subtle pressure or deception in an intimate relationship. It should go without saying that anyone who puts you down, uses violence against you or tries to force you into sex is an unhealthy partner.

Many readers will also find the information given at the end of each chapter useful. It contains more information about organizations & resources where one can get help or advice. Being a Teen is informative and resourceful, a book teens can dip into whenever they are faced with obstacles, that they can read and refer back to again and again. Some may be cynical about the book but I honestly believe that the author delivers this treasure-trove for teens to guide them onto a path that will lead them to healthy relationships, happy family and above all, a really satisfying life.
