



The Blessing of a B Minus: Using Jewish Teachings to Raise Resilient Teenagers

Wendy Mogel

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In the follow-up to her bestselling book, *The Blessing of a Skinned Knee*, Dr. Wendy Mogel shows parents how to navigate the teenage years.

When a child becomes a teenager, her sense of entitlement and independence grows, the pressure to compete skyrockets, and communication becomes fraught with obstacles. Dr. Wendy Mogel emphasizes empathy and guidance over micromanaging teens' lives and overreacting to missteps. She reveals that emotional outbursts, rudeness, rule-breaking, staying up late, and other worrisome teen behaviors are in fact normal and necessary steps in psychological growth and character development to be met with thoughtful care, not anxiety. With her signature wit and warmth, Mogel gives parents the tools to do so, offering reassuring advice on:

- why influence is more effective than control
- teenage narcissism
- living graciously with rudeness
- the surprising value of ordinary work
- why risk is essential preparation for the post-high school years
- when to step in and when to step back

The Blessing of a B Minus is an important and inspiring book that will fortify parents through the teenage years.

The Blessing of a B Minus: Using Jewish Teachings to Raise Resilient Teenagers Details

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StMargarets says

I loved this book so much I went out and bought it. As my son approaches high school graduation, I can honestly say that Mogel's commonsense philosophy and reassuring words helped me keep my sanity these past two years.

I first found this book when I googled "overparenting." I realized I had a problem when I was more worried about my son's grades than he was. This book explained a lot about what teenagers are experiencing now in school and how over protective, interfering parents can make it worse.

So how to let go? Realize it's (it's = failing a test, sleeping late, forgetting stuff, defiance, etc) part of the process of growing up. Mogel takes you through what's normal and what's not and how to deal with it.

Even though I'm not Jewish, I enjoyed her explanations of Jewish rituals and teachings and how she used them for metaphors to describe what's happening to teens.

This book is full of heart and feels like a good friend who is giving you good advice because she's been there, done that.

Laura Lawlor says

A must-read for anyone trying to navigate the tween and teen wolf stages of their offspring!

Also the prequel: Blessings of a Skinned Knee should be on every parent's bedside table.

You don't have to be Jewish to love these books...sound, non-sectarian advice for floundering and frustrated parents.

Melody Warnick says

The upshot of this warm, wise book: "Chill out, it'll all be okay."

Arryn says

The title of this book intrigued me. What, I asked myself, is the blessing in a B minus? Other chapter headings include "The Blessing of a Bad Attitude," "The Blessing of a Lost Sweater," "The Blessing of Staying Up Late," and so forth. The author manages to find a bright side to many of the frustrations of parenting teens. She emphasizes how important it is to let them fail and learn from their mistakes now rather than later in life when the stakes are so much higher. This book was a good reminder for me to allow my teens a little more freedom and to help them navigate the natural consequences of their choices. Based on Jewish principles, Vogel's ideas rang true with the exception of the last chapter, "The Blessing of a Hangover." Even then, though, I totally see where she's coming from. By the end of the book, I felt validated

in so many ways and I was more appreciative than ever of my five wonderfully imperfect children.

Nmuller says

I love this book. Our church used her first book, "Blessings of a Skinned Knee" years ago, and I have had this one on my to-read list for some time.

Wendy Mogel calms my parenting brain, and she reminds me how much I love my kids. Both on the days when they are lovely and sweet, and also on the days when they are stubborn and well, stupid. Her words help me remember that these little people are wonderful works in process, and there really is a method to their madness. If I could meet her, I would give her the biggest hug of thanks.

Gloria says

Okay, I'm struggling with my own issues when it comes to living with an adolescent who is so unlike me... and so I have been seeking self-help/parenting books. Of the two that I have read/listened to, this one resonates with me the most. I thought her first book *Blessings of a Skinned Knee* lovely (read as part of a parenting book club), but this one speaks more directly to me and my issues.

Similar to *Parenting From the Inside Out* in many ways, it really does address the issues of parents' expectation (what am I bringing to this relationship, what is my part of all of this) which is helpful. Especially when I do really have two great kids, and I need to have the confidence in them that they have absorbed what it is that we have been trying to teach them. Just like my day job, I can teach, but it is up to them to learn... practice... absorb.

And so I learn again this lesson of letting go. And this book is a lovely way to be reminded.

Milton says

A important book to all of those who are teen's parents or are going to be in the near future. Tip and tricks of how to deal with misbehavior, profanity, laziness, and distance most if not all teens express to their parents. Wendy Mogel does a great storytelling but at the same time explains professionally why we have to constrain of confronting our teens but keeping basic core rules. A must if you have a boy or girl in this journey: Puberty.

Jane says

Well, now that my boy will s nearly 12, this was more relevant. Sensible advice, nothing new.

This seems really good, but it's definitely about teenagers. I'll put it away for 2 more years at least.

Vicki says

My new bible! Great practice advice for the stage of parenting I'm in now. And bonus: I'm not doing everything wrong!!

Sheila says

Words of wisdom from a funny woman. I loved *Skinned Knee* and this one was almost as good. My favorite take away is an umbrella thought: our children, at all ages, need to see and believe that we believe in them. That we trust in them to try, to fail, to succeed. That we aren't always afraid. That we believe they are capable, more than capable. How can they believe it if they don't believe that we do? Stop doing for your kids (I'm talking to myself here) and show them that you believe they can do it. You can do it! Oh, and they should get jobs, be bad now and again, safely experiment and b minuses are perfect if that is what they earned.

Annie says

If you have children between 11 and 20 (or if you plan on your kids reaching those ages, for that matter), go get this book right now. Mogel's take on parenting teens is compassionate, wise, and inspired. Much like her earlier book *The Blessing of a Skinned Knee*, which was geared toward parents of younger children, Mogel draws from her understanding of Jewish teachings to reframe some of the challenges children face (and the associated frustrations of parenting them) into blessings.

In *The Blessing of a B Minus*, Mogel reminds us of, among others:

- ~The blessing of strange fruit: Accepting the unique glory of your teen
- ~The blessing of a B minus: The real lessons of homework, chores, and jobs
- ~The blessing of problems to solve: Learning from bad judgment and stress
- ~The blessing of breaking the rules: Real life as ethics lab

Am I Jewish? No. But the ideas that Mogel discusses are universal and accessible for all. For example, she uses the story of the Israelites' wandering in the desert with Moses, noting that the presence of God was a "pillar of cloud by day...and a pillar of fire by night." This beautiful image is a model for parents whose children are wandering in the wilderness of adolescence. Like God, you stand by, providing shade and light when needed, but mostly you stand back. You wait to see if your child can solve problems on his own before stepping in; you let him experience the natural consequences of his poor decisions; and you give him the freedom to make mistakes, even big ones."

As the parent of three children (12, 14, 17) it's a great relief to read such a wonderful book that eases some of the anxieties we parents face during this stage of parenting. As a doctoral student studying parenting and child development, I'm just a little jealous I didn't write this!

Carol says

I read this book just before I read the "Battle Hymn of the Tiger Mother" and I could not have had 2 books more opposite!

I have told many of mom friends about this book. I found most of the book practical and very useful. I really liked the approach the author used Jewish beliefs and applied those practices to teens. I am not Jewish but found the book made sense. I am actually feeling just a LITTLE more confident (or at least understand a little better!) as my daughter moves into her teen years.

Diana says

As a teacher of early teens, I thought I could find some nuggets to improve my teaching and my understanding of my students. And maybe I've found a few, but I realize that I don't have enough time with my students to pursue many of these strategies. 2 hours per week and 2 dozen students. Impossible!

Valerie says

I wish I had read this book 10 years ago. It would have helped me so much with setting boundaries with everyone, which is a skill I certainly need to work on.

Jordana Horn Gordon says

Wendy Mogel, you are super smart and kind. I hope I can be a tenth of the parent you are!
