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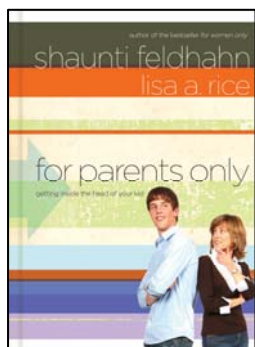
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What Makes Your Teen Tick?

Revealing New Parenting Book Goes Directly to the Experts—Kids Themselves



Dallas/Fort Worth, TX—Filled with profound, eye-opening and statistically solid survey results garnered from more than 1,200 teenagers nationwide, *For Parents Only* (September 2007, Multnomah Books) offers moms and dads a never-before-seen glimpse into the hearts and minds of their children. Revealing six surprising truths that parents often just don't 'get' about their teens —such as what's really going on behind that attitude -- best-selling authors Shaunti Feldhahn and Lisa A. Rice unravel the mysteries behind the misunderstood behavior of young people.

“Whether you’re the parent of a small child and want to lay a foundation for the years ahead, or whether you only have a few months left until Junior leaves the nest, the goal of this book is to help you understand several key things that are likely going on in the inner life of your child, some inner wiring that you may have never understood before,” writes Feldhahn. “Our goal is to serve as your tour guides through the strange and wonderful world of ‘teendom’ and give you new information to help you understand what’s going on inside kids . . . and how these facts can give clearer direction to your parenting.”

For Parents Only better equips moms and dads to not only maximize, but also enjoy the precious time they have with their children. By better understanding their kids’ secret needs, fears and desires, parents will be much better equipped to not only relate well with them now, but be a guiding influence in their lives for years to come.

Shaunti Feldhahn is a nationally syndicated newspaper columnist, public speaker and a best-selling author whose books include *For Women Only*. After working on Wall Street and Capitol Hill, this mother of two now applies her analytical skills to figuring out the underlying issues that drive people and their relationships. She lives with her husband Jeff and their children in the Atlanta, GA area.

Lisa A. Rice is the associate editor of *Christian Living* magazine, the mother and foster mom of three teenage girls and one pre-teen boy, and an experienced screenwriter and producer. She’s also the coauthor, with Shaunti Feldhahn, of *For Young Women Only*.

For Parents Only

Shaunti Feldhahn and Lisa A. Rice

Multnomah Books September 11, 2007

ISBN-13: 978-1-59052-923-4/Hardcover/192 Pages/\$14.99 U.S./\$20.99 Canada

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Delivering the message

www.tbbmedia.com

What People Are Saying about *For Parents Only*

“Shaunti and Lisa have done an outstanding job talking about the issues, confusion and dreams our kids face as they grow—and thus the issues we face as parents. . . . I encourage you to pick up this book and start the journey of understanding today.”

JIM DALY, president, Focus on the Family

“Shaunti and Lisa have boldly gone where no one has gone before: straight into the brain of a teenager! The insights they have found give us a unique peek into the hopes, fears, desires and challenges facing the next generation. Savvy parents will read and respond to what they learn in this book, and their family will be better as a result.”

DENNIS RAINEY, president, FamilyLife

“At times I felt like I was sitting at a school lunch table, listening in on how kids really feel about their parents and what they would like to tell them. Shaunti and Lisa do an exceptional job of researching the topic and then making very practical suggestions. This gets my Five-Star rating on the HomeWord.com web site.”

JIM BURNS, Ph.D., president, HomeWord, and author of *Confident Parenting*

“I am so grateful for the hours of compassionate listening, ton of credible research and weight of brutal honesty represented within the pages of this book. As a mother of three teenagers, I am the first to admit that I need help! Thank you, Shaunti and Lisa, for coming alongside on this wild, woolly and wonderful adventure.”

LISA WHELCHER, best-selling author of *Creative Correction*, *The Busy Mom’s Guide to Prayer*, and *Taking Care of the “Me” in Mommy*

“Do you remember how Maria responded when Captain Von Trapp proposed marriage? That’s right, she said, ‘Let’s ask the children.’ Instead of speculating and postulating and pontificating, Shaunti and Lisa have done a brilliant thing. They’ve asked the children. And the children—teenagers—have told them the truth. I commend this important book to you.”

DR. ROBERT WOLGEMUTH, best-selling author of *She Calls Me Daddy* and *Dad’s Bible*

“Shaunti and Lisa provide parents a practical roadmap for helping their teens stay anchored and safe during the many storms of adolescence.”

WALT LARIMORE, M.D., best-selling author of *God’s Design for the Highly Healthy Teen*

“Wondering what’s going on inside the mind of a teenager has produced sleepless nights for most parents. From this day forward you will wonder no longer. Shaunti and Lisa have produced an eye-opener and a parent-maker. Read it, digest it and apply it . . . and you’ll be sleeping again in no time.”

DR. CHUCK BORSELLINO, psychologist and author of *How to Raise Totally Awesome Kids* and *Pinocchio Parenting*

“This book is sheer dynamite, first and foremost because it is based on real research talking with real kids about their values, feelings and beliefs. *For Parents Only* explores some of the most important issues of raising teenagers in a very challenging world. This book should be read by parents of kids of all ages.”

RICK SCHATZ, president and CEO, National Coalition for the Protection of Children & Families

Biography of Shaunti Feldhahn

Co-Author of *For Parents Only*



Shaunti Feldhahn possesses a story that befits her unique name. Before she was born, her parents were Peace Corps volunteers to India and chose to name her after the Hindi word for “peace.” The family settled in the Virginia suburbs of Washington, D.C. where Shaunti’s father, a Ph.D. economist, worked at the World Bank and her mother founded and ran an anti-drug-abuse foundation for a decade before becoming a nurse. From childhood, even into her twenty-somethings, Shaunti’s passion was for the stage. She choreographed, danced or sang in more productions than she can count—experience that has come in handy now that she fulfills frequent speaking engagements.

Shaunti began her career as an analyst on Wall Street and today is a bestselling author, speaker and nationally-syndicated newspaper columnist. Her recent bestsellers, *For Women Only: What You Need to Know About the Inner Lives of Men* and *For Men Only: A Straightforward Guide to the Inner Lives of Women*, have led to great life-change—and plenty of fascinating conversation—for men and women around the country. She has written two books with youth speaker Lisa Rice: *For Young Women Only*, which has already generated a buzz among teenage girls, and *For Parents Only: Getting Inside the Head of Your Kid*, which debuts in September 2007. She has also authored two true-to-life spiritual thrillers.

Shaunti’s background as an analyst is the launching point for the compelling and eye-opening nature of her books, talks and columns. “What I can do as an analyst is to get you inside the head of the subjects of the book, to show you what they are thinking. My laser-focused objective is to bring surprises to light,” Feldhahn states. “I’m not a counselor or a psychologist. I’m just an analyst who happened to stumble across some fascinating surprises and had the ability to dig into them and bring them to other people in ‘sitting down over coffee’ terms.”

Shaunti’s credentials are impressive by any standard. She holds a master’s in public policy from Harvard University and a bachelor’s in government and economics from The College of William & Mary. Prior to becoming an author, she worked in the financial arena on Capitol Hill and later on Wall Street, analyzing the Japanese financial crisis for the highest level decision makers of the Federal Reserve System.

As a national speaker, Shaunti travels extensively and has shared her findings with millions of people through conferences, television and radio. She has appeared on such diverse media outlets as PBS, TNT, *Soap Talk*, *The Alan Colmes Show*, *Focus on the Family*, *FamilyLife Today* and *The 700 Club*. Her weekly opinion columns are printed in fifty newspapers around the country, including the *Atlanta Journal-Constitution*, the *Chicago Tribune*, the *Detroit Free Press* and the *Seattle Times*.

Shaunti and her husband, Jeff, with whom she coauthored *For Men Only*, met when both were students at Harvard. The couple began their life together in New York. “Jeff worked 18-hour days for five years, like all New York lawyers,” Shaunti recalls. “We wanted kids, and we couldn’t raise a family with a dad who never saw them, so we moved to Atlanta.” Jeff is now an entrepreneur. He is also a hands-on dad who runs his businesses and legal practice in a way that allows him to step in and care for the couple’s two children when Shaunti travels. Shaunti and Jeff share a love of the outdoors and are active leaders in their church. Visit www.shaunti.com.

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Biography of Lisa Rice

Co-Author of *For Parents Only*



Lisa Rice's twelfth grade English teacher was so scary that all but nine of her fellow students dropped the class. Never one to shrink from an artistic challenge, Lisa chose to stick it out. She can still remember the comment that charted the course of her career, written by Mrs. Kelly in the margin of a term paper: *Lisa, you strike a chord! Keep writing.*

As an author and screenwriter, Lisa finds that the most compelling stories often come from the lives of everyday people. "Everyone has an article, a book and a movie in them," Lisa says. "I like pulling out the goodies in people." She is a frequent contributor to books, magazines and newspapers and was the founding associate editor of *Christian Living Magazine*.

Lisa partnered with best-selling author (and good friend) Shaunti Feldhahn to co-author *For Young Women Only: What You Need to Know About How Guys Think*, a book based on interviews of hundreds of teenage guys and a groundbreaking national, professional survey. Lisa is already busy speaking to youth groups on her surprising findings about teenage guys and has recently developed an abstinence-based talk that includes some hard-hitting statistics and quotes from teen guys throughout the nation. *For Parents Only*, her latest collaboration with Shaunti, is set for release in September 2007.

Lisa also writes weekly movie reviews for Crosswalk.com, a job her son describes as "the best in the whole world—they pay you more than a hundred dollars, and they buy your ticket." For Lisa, movies are more than just entertainment. "Movies are the pulpit of the world. Those who have eyes to see and ears to hear—they can find truth," Lisa reflects. "The world knows how to lay out the issues in the heart of humanity, but they don't often know how to solve the problems. My calling is to be a bridge to the world system using the media and portraying movies that are so compelling...but then giving the answer from my side of the island."

Though she earned a degree in business management with an emphasis in communications from Georgia State University, Lisa met her husband, Eric, while both were students at Oral Roberts University. The couple has written a number of screenplays, one of which is in development with Mandalay-Prelude Pictures.

Lisa and Eric live with their preteen son and three teenage daughters near Atlanta, Georgia, in a home that expresses the family's off-the-charts creativity. The Rice home is filled with messy desks, musical instruments, palettes of paint and post-it notes with messages like: *Who left the milk out overnight?* In her spare time, she plays the piano for events and helps Eric with his business of making commercials. The Rices also enjoy traveling and scuba diving with their children.

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Suggestion Interview Questions for Shaunti Feldhahn and Lisa A. Rice

1. Your previous titles in this series have been about helping men, women and young women better understand the opposite gender. What led you to think *For Parents Only* was needed, and what was your goal in writing it?
2. You spent a lot of time, effort and money on research for this book. Give us a brief overview of your research methods and what makes this approach unique.

Okay, in *For Parents Only* you reveal six surprising findings about what is going on inside the minds and hearts of our kids. Let's dig into these.

3. A lot of parents wonder what influences kids more—parents or peers. But you found that something else motivates teens more than any person—and you actually compare it to cocaine! What is it that motivates our kids so much?
4. Some other things that confuse parents are the changes their child goes through, why they are constantly crying, “You don't understand me!” and why on earth their child finds Mom and Dad so *embarrassing*. What causes this?
5. We've all seen those infuriating attitudes that sometimes crop up. But you explain that sometimes those attitudes actually hide something else. What is that, and how should knowing that affect a parent's response?
6. We all know that listening is the foundation of good communication, but sometimes we can't even get our kids to talk to us! Why is that? Can you share some tips with our listeners to help parents let their kids know they are listening?
7. What are some of the other surprises that parents tend not “to get” about their kids?
8. When it comes to some of the difficult behaviors, like rebellion and lying to parents, was there a difference between kids who attended church regularly and those who held no particular religious beliefs?
9. Shaunti, as the mom of young children, and Lisa, as the mom and foster mom of 4 teenagers, how were you each able to apply this new information to your own parenting?
10. You received an overwhelming response when teens were asked what they most wanted to tell their parents. What did they say?
11. If you had to pick one overwhelming need that the kids seemed to have, that applied across *all* of your findings, what would it be?

Talking Points

- Understanding what teens are really saying when they rebel or take foolish risks
- Why kids suddenly seem to question everything about their parents, and find them so *embarrassing*
- When kids fight against the rules, do they really *want* parents to back down?
- How to handle your kid's big mistakes
- Why kids say, ‘you don't listen to me!’ and what listening really means to them
- What's really behind those infuriating ‘attitudes’?

Q&A with
Shaunti Feldhahn and Lisa Rice
authors of *For Parents Only*

1. Your previous titles in this series have been about helping men, women and young women better understand the opposite gender. What led you to think *For Parents Only* was needed, and what was your goal in writing it?
 - I (Lisa) was having coffee with my dear friend, Linda, during the writing of *For Young Women Only*. She looked over the manuscript, got a faraway look in her eyes and said, “This is great, but you know what I could really use? A book called *For Parents Only*. Wouldn’t it be great if parents had the chance to get inside the heads of hundreds of kids you’ve interviewed and surveyed?” A light bulb went off, and Shaunti and I were all over it! (Incidentally, Linda is the gal on our cover!) Then, as Shaunti began mentioning the idea at her conferences and speaking events, the women went nuts. No other book (that any of us know of) comes from this perspective. . . of literally presenting things from the viewpoint of the children. The book contains hundreds of quotes from teens throughout the nation, with eye-opening findings that will both surprise and encourage parents.
2. You spent a lot of time, effort and money on research for this book. Give us a brief overview of your research methods and what makes this approach unique.
 - We applied the same rigorous analytical techniques used for the other books, which was inviting kids of all walks of life (band, church, neighborhoods, etc.) to one of nine focus groups, where we discussed all the things they thought parents “just aren’t getting.” We then culled down their responses, formulated 25 thought-provoking questions (with the help of Chuck Cowan, the former chief of survey design at the Census Bureau), and hired the world-renowned survey company Decision Analyst to do a big, expensive, professional, national scientific survey. So it’s not just what a few hundred kids in Atlanta are saying. It’s truly representative of kids throughout the country.

Okay, in *For Parents Only* you reveal six surprising findings about what is going on inside the minds and hearts of our kids. Let’s dig into these.

3. A lot of parents wonder what influences kids more—parents or peers. But you found that something else motivates teens more than any person—and you actually compare it to cocaine! What is it that motivates our kids so much?
 - You know, several studies have come out asking which factor is a higher influence on our kids—peers or parents? But we found it’s neither. According to our survey, the biggest motivator of our kids is not parents or peers, but rather freedom! We tease in the book by starting the freedom chapter with “Your kids are addicted. They really are.” They’re addicted to the quest for freedom and—here’s the key—they are even more terrified of losing it. In fact, many admit that they will do what it takes to keep their treasured freedom—even, in some cases, lying, cheating, sneaking out, etc. So we pass along to parents what the kids advised about how to help a child learn to manage his or her growing freedoms wisely, rather than trying to prevent that quest.

- When discipline must be imposed, some parents unintentionally make the situation worse by imposing a punishment that the parent views as minor but the kid views as *huge*. We encourage parents to begin to investigate and test discipline options that will impose consequences and teach their children lessons but *without* always triggering the fear of loss of freedom. In particular, we suggest parents understand what specific freedoms are most treasured by their child (cell phone, car, etc.) and realize that their loss is “the nuclear bomb” of discipline. Then, parents can reserve the ‘nuclear bomb’ only for situations when that is truly appropriate. And they will likely find that other discipline options get the lesson across, but without as much resentment.
4. Some other things that confuse parents are the changes their child goes through, why they are constantly crying, “You don’t understand me!” and why on earth their child finds Mom and Dad so *embarrassing*. What causes this?
 - We have a whole chapter on this! We call it “Identity,” and basically we talk about how healthy children **MUST** pull away—for a time—from even the best parents in order to find out who they are on the inside. They have to “build their own castle,” but the problem is that the only building blocks they have to work with are ours! So *the only way* they can figure out who they are is to actually dismantle Mom and Dad’s castle in order to reconstruct their own. And for a time that can look like rejection of everything Mom and Dad believe in—but it’s really just a kid’s effort to say, “I’ve heard this my whole life; I know it is who Mom is—but is it who I am?” And most kids say they’ll come back to their parents’ values *if* they are allowed to make them their own. So at this stage, “pushing” a value is counterproductive—because it simply makes it even more clear to the kid that those values are part of the parents’ castle—not their own.
 - Another part of the dismantling process includes turning to a parent and saying (even subconsciously), “You’re so embarrassing. I’m not like you. I’m cool.” Parents are so often offended, but in reality, the kids are doing what they were designed to do. . . become healthy, confident adults.
 5. We’ve all seen those infuriating attitudes that sometimes crop up. But you explain that sometimes those attitudes actually hide something else. What is that, and how should knowing that affect a parent’s response?
 - We found that when a boy stomps off in anger and cloisters himself in his room, or when a girl lips off to her parents, they’re not just proving that they’re hormonal roller coasters or “quivering bundles of emotion,” as our psychologist expert says, but rather they are often screaming—in their way—that their core needs are not being met and/or their core fears are being triggered. We conducted several fascinating focus groups where the kids themselves made a list of these core needs and fears, and the differences between the sexes were astounding. Basically, a guy’s greatest fear is inadequacy, and his greatest need is to be respected—especially for what he does. A girl’s greatest fear, on the other hand, is rejection, and her greatest need is to be considered special and unconditionally loved for who she is. And if those fears are triggered—not just at home, but even more likely by other areas of their life—boys will start getting withdrawn and sullen, and girls will start getting lippy. So parents can at least partially help by doing what they can to build confidence and not adding to the insecurity.

6. We all know that listening is the foundation of good communication—but sometimes we can't even get our kids to talk to us! Why is that? Can you share some tips with our listeners to help parents let their kids know they are listening?
 - We were shocked that kids say that parents don't listen to them because that's what we parents have been saying all along about them! When we really pressed the kids, however, what we heard was this: Three-fourths of kids say that if they knew parents wouldn't freak out, they would love to share things with them. But here's the key: We parents tend to filter out all our kids' histrionics and "go for the fix," but kids told us that they actually want their emotions to be addressed and affirmed before any fix can be applied. So in other words, filter out the problem for a minute and empathize with their feelings, and they may or may not even *need* a fix once their feelings are defused.
 - Kids also say parents can't "freak out," which, we found out, means "any negative or positive display of emotion." So, even positive statements like, "Oh, I really like that boy you were talking to at the party" is "freaking out." Who knew?
7. What are some of the other surprises that parents tend not to "get" about their kids?
 - There are so many! Here's a biggie. . . We parents think kids don't want rules or discipline, but here's what we learned from the children: Although our teens test our authority and argue with rules, they secretly want us to stand firm as parents and will lose respect for us if we don't! In our chapter, "The Good Thing about Being the Bad Guy," we asked the kids whether they'd want a parent who would buy them the things they want, let them do the things they want, go where they want, not hassle them about homework, and so on. OR would they prefer a parent that sets reasonable rules, ensures they do their homework, cares about who they hang out with, and so on. Over three-fourths said they secretly want the take-charge parent, and not the parent who acts more like a friend! One kid said, "We haven't completely learned how to discipline ourselves yet, so we still need their discipline until we learn it for ourselves." In this chapter, we show parents some good ways they can bravely put on their "parent hat" and learn to be loving and firm—the one in charge!
8. When it comes to some of the difficult behaviors, like rebellion and lying to parents, was there a difference between kids who attended church regularly and those who held no particular religious beliefs?
 - Actually, there was. In a lot of our survey questions about how kids *felt*, we honestly saw no difference between secular kids and those who identify themselves as Christians who went to church every week. But when it came to what they chose to *do* about their feelings, there was a significant difference in at least a few areas. Most dramatically, seven out of ten average teens said they would probably go ahead and do something they wanted to do even if their folks wouldn't approve. Only three in ten would stop themselves. But among the kids attending private, Protestant Christian schools, that number was almost *reversed*, with nearly two-thirds saying they would stop themselves. We thought that would be pretty encouraging to protestant Christian schools.
9. Shaunti, as the mom of young children, and Lisa, as the mom and foster mom of 4 teenagers, how were you each able to apply this new information to your own parenting?

- Oh, an application presents itself on a daily basis! Even as we were turning this book in, we had a situation in my (Lisa's) house. Our kids admitted that, while we were at the beach, they snuck out of the rental house and met some new friends—including strange guys—on the beach! My husband and I wanted to ground them from everything (including birthdays and getting married), and we didn't care what fears our severe punishment triggered in them. I had to re-read our own "Freedom" chapter and make sure our findings and philosophy could stand the test of our own angry tirade. When I calmed down, I saw that it did, since this was indeed a time when "the nuclear bomb of discipline" was probably called for! But with an eye to just how much radiation a kid could stand, we also put together a discipline package that included both loss of key freedoms for a time but also other options that would both meet our objectives as parents and avoid the rebellion that could drive a lasting wedge between our kids and us.
 - As the parent of younger kids, I (Shaunti) am so grateful to learn these things *ahead* of time, so that I can at least try to lay a good foundation and avoid some mistakes as they grow, just through lack of information. I was also really delighted to see that several of the issues—like listening to the feelings first and addressing problems with calmness instead of 'excessive emotion'—apply even to a 4 and 7 year old! My 7-year-old daughter was so upset by a girl who was bullying her at school, and I went on a rampage to address it and talk to the teacher and the other parent, but it didn't help her feel any better. She kept saying she didn't want to go back to school, which is unusual for her. Finally, I was doing our final edits on our "listen-to-the-feelings-first" chapter and slapped my forehead. So I cuddled on the couch with my little girl and asked her how she felt when the bully targeted her, and how the other kids responded, and affirmed that I could understand how difficult this was and how much that must hurt. And that empathy finally helped resolve what the attempted solution could not: she felt better. (And thankfully, several months later, the bullying has mostly stopped, too!)
10. You received an overwhelming response when teens were asked what they most wanted to tell their parents. What did they say?
- This really made us cry. We asked the kids on our survey this question: "Now we want you to imagine something very difficult. If you were to somehow find out that your parents were going to die tomorrow, what would you most want to tell them today?" Out of the hundreds of responses that rolled in, nearly all of them said something like this: "I would want to tell them how much I love them, and how sorry I am for the things I've done."
11. If you had to pick one overwhelming need that the kids seemed to have, that applied across *all* of your findings, what would it be?
- Kids need to feel that parents really listen, understand, encourage and validate them as the unique creatures they really are.
 - The biggest lesson to take away as parents is that God's ability to accomplish his purposes in our kids' lives far surpasses our ability to mess the deal up! How encouraging!