

Yes, Your Teen is Crazy – Loving Your Kid Without Losing Your Mind **(Michael J. Bradley 2003)**

The author refers to the book as a *survival guide* for parents raising new millennium adolescents. He begins by confirming that your teen is crazy, or temporarily brain-damaged. Basically, during this phase of a kid's life their brain is going through some major growth and development. The brain is being rewired and becoming interconnected so that when they make it through this adolescent period into adulthood they will be able to function as a *normal* (rational, self-aware, emotionally stable, intelligent) human being. [Have any of us parents achieved this level yet? Just curious.]

The book is separated into three parts:

Part 1 – a description of adolescence including their insane behaviors-*what's normal and what's not*, a discussion of new discoveries regarding their brain development, and info on how their changing brain interacts with the dangerous world we've (society) created around them (sex, drugs and rock-n-roll/rage-violence).

Part 2 – basically lets us know that most of our instincts about parenting are wrong and these instinctual parenting behaviors could actually create more problems than they solve. It also explains how a parent's personality and behaviors influence their adolescent [Hint –they are watching you. *Do as I say, not as I do...they aren't buying it.*]

Part 3 – since the old ideas and rules about parenting do not work in this new millennium, we need to be re-trained and develop new skills to deal with the insanity raging in your kid's brain and world. You will learn these new skills in this part, be presented with problem solving strategies, and given the 10 Commandments of Parenting Teens.

The book uses real experiences and examples from the author's extensive work with adolescents. The author keeps the dialogue light, with doses of humor, to keep the text flowing and you engaged. I took a lot away from this book and find myself rereading sections.

Some of the things that resonated with me the most:

Don't forget that our teens are kids, not adults.

Be calm, cool, consistent, and compassionate. *We still have the greatest influence over our kids-not their peers.*

Learn to be the dispassionate cop- *empathize but be steadfast.*

Don't personalize your kid's outrageous behavior- *your child is really not sane.*

Listen and be understanding - *these are difficult times for your kid.*

Be honest. Be respectful.

Be a parent and a role model, not a friend. *Newflash: Don't try to be cool cuz you're not.*

Kids will always challenge you, but they do want a competent adult in charge.

Use negotiation, or an open-minded process, for making decisions with your kid (ask questions, give them options, have them present their case, have them list the pros/cons to different options or solutions, keep the conversation going/keep them talking, do not prejudge or insult). These sessions instill respect, promote problem solving, and are times of personal growth.

Keep yourself and your marital relationship healthy, take time for you.

Rely on your spouse when you are mentally spent. However do not let your spouse interrupt or take over your exchanges between you and your kid.

Take the opportunity, as they arise, to have those **mini-conversations** with your kid about important topics that will help form their character, values, ...and keep the communication channels open. Don't sweat the small stuff. They need to try on different identities so that at the end of this adolescent period they have one formed- (so they know who they are and what their values are). Trial and error is good, let the world teach them some lessons while they are still safely in your care *basically, as long as they are not in danger let them dye their hair, wear the crazy clothes...*

Above all, keep your sense of humor!