

FCD UPDATE

FCD Educational Services, Inc.

A Nonprofit Organization

Alcohol, Tobacco, and Other Drug Education

Fall 2000

Teaching Teens to Get HIGH!

The best way to keep kids off drugs is to teach them to get “high” — in healthy, positive ways. Getting high is fun. It’s natural. In fact, the desire to experience ecstatic moments and alternative states of consciousness is all part of nature’s grand design. It’s no accident that behaviors necessary for the survival of the species are pleasurable. The human race would have died out long ago if every time someone ate a meal or had sex they said, “YICCCHH, BLECCCCH, I HATE THIS!!!!

One of the things we’ve learned at FCD from talking with over a million students is that when teenagers take drugs, it’s not necessarily because they want to “do drugs.” It’s because they want to stop feeling bored, angry, hurt, worried, harassed, afraid, inadequate, ostracized, lonely, or anxious. And there’s nothing wrong with wanting to relax, seek a thrill, take a risk, “escape” reality, bond with friends, or disappear into a state of meditative bliss. Getting high isn’t the problem. How you do it is.

A senior at a boarding school confided to us: “I have a few hours the whole week to myself. I don’t have time to do yoga or breathing exercises to unwind. So my friends and I get wasted. It’s instant relief, no messing around.” As this student discovered, the main “advantage” of drugs is that they work quickly. The problem, of course, is that drugs mess with your mind and body, posing myriad social, emotional, psychological, physical, and legal risks — both to oneself and others. Over time, more of the drug may be needed to achieve the same result, and one can become dependent on something outside



of oneself to feel good or deal with life. Adolescents, whose bodies and life skills are still developing, are especially vulnerable to dependency if they use substances as a means of coping with feelings, stress, and social insecurities.

If we want to help young people stay drug-free, we need to do more than teach them that drugs can be dangerous. We need to acknowledge the reasons kids turn to drugs, and offer healthy, constructive alternatives.

In his new book, *HIGHS! Over 150 Ways to Feel Really, REALLY Good Without Alcohol or Other Drugs*, FCD president Alex Packer offers teens (and adults!) a smorgasbord of highs including rushes, thrill-seeking, X-treme sports, inner journeying, adrenaline highs, sensuous highs, visual highs, intellectual highs, spiritual highs, deprivation highs, creative highs, and nature highs. Many non-drug-induced highs require practice, knowl-

edge, patience, or training. But people who seek natural highs report that they get *more* peace, pleasure, excitement, and insight from these kinds of experiences than they ever did from taking drugs.

The best highs come, not from a chemical substance, but from a way of life. While healthy highs are their own reward, teens who pursue them with passion may benefit twice-over by gaining recognition, academic success, a fulfilling career or life-long interest — even a gold medal at the Olympics.

Effective prevention should include healthy ways for kids to relieve anxiety, relax, pump up the adrenaline, or take a “trip.” FCD’s experience shows that teens crave and use alternative highs once exposed to them. In fact, one of the most popular components of our four-day course is a guided visualization that shows kids how they can use the power of their mind to reduce stress and physical tension.

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Some of What's Inside...

Teaching Teens to Get High

You heard us right. Our feature article looks at some of the reasons young people turn to drugs, and offers healthy, alternative ways to relax, relieve anxiety, “escape” reality, or pump up the adrenaline.

How Stress-Resistant Are You?

Take FCD’s quiz to find out whether you’re cruising near the stress red zone, and find out what you can do to experience the incredible high that comes from feeling calm, confident, and in control.

Back by Popular Demand

Just in time for the holidays, FCD serves up some new books through its popular “Give a Gift, Get a Gift” special offer to donors.

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From the President

Research shows that normative beliefs – perceptions about the prevalence and acceptability of drug use among one's peer group and close friends – strongly predict future drug use. In other words, a teen who believes that "everyone" at his or her school thinks it's "okay" or "no big deal" to drink and take drugs is more likely to use. Studies also show that drug use is less prevalent in schools where non-use is recognized and respected as a "cool" and acceptable choice.



Alex J. Packer

Non-using students are a powerful and untapped prevention force. They are the bedrock of health upon which any school community is built. Over the past several years, FCD has modified the four-day course to place greater emphasis on supporting students who are choosing not to use. While we still address risk factors and spend considerable time discussing alcohol and other drug use, it is equally important to strengthen protective factors. FCD health educators now talk about the issues non-using kids face, and suggest healthy, alternative ways to reduce stress, feel good, and get "high" without alcohol or other drugs. In addition, we are intensifying our commitment to help the schools we serve establish their own support and advocacy groups for students who choose not to use.

There are a number of things you can do to help kids make the right choices:

Educate yourself. Don't deny or underestimate the presence of drugs in your child's school and/or peer group. One survey showed that 21 percent of parents believed that their teenager might have tried marijuana. The actual figure, as reported by teens, was 44 percent! In another survey, 78 percent of teenagers, as opposed to 18 percent of school principals, said that there were drugs in their school.

Talk with your kids. Be clear and consistent about your thoughts and feelings regarding drug use. Children of parents who talk to them about the risks of drugs are less likely to use drugs than are children whose parents don't mention these issues at home. In addition, teens are more likely to listen and change their behavior if they are involved in a discussion rather than subjected to a speech.

Create a safe and functioning family. Research shows that children raised by parents who are highly authoritarian or permissive are more likely to engage in high-risk behavior and/or have social, emotional, and academic problems. Children who have strong bonds with their families, and whose parents provide positive reinforcement, set appropriate limits, and offer open-minded guidance, are more likely to remain drug-free. Stay involved in your child's life. Eat dinner as a family. Maintain rituals. Treat each other with respect. Have fun together.

Encourage your children towards healthy experimentation. Expose your kids to people, activities, and opportunities that nurture self-confidence and widen horizons. Support and encourage their interests. Don't let yourself get sidetracked by the "small battles": clothes, tastes in music, personal style. Recognize your child's need to be "different" – and conforming – and help him or her find "cool," alternative ways to take risks, feel good, find serenity, and get a rush.

And finally, the next time your child says, "I'm bored, there's nothing to do," say, "Go get high, dear!"

Alex J. Packer, Ph.D.

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Many of the ideas and techniques contained in *HIGHS!* are perfect for the classroom. A few minutes of deep breathing, progressive relaxation, or belly-laughing at the beginning of class can help students calm down and focus. And, such exercises provide students with strategies they can use in all areas of their lives to relieve stress and maximize performance.

Here, from *HIGHS! Over 150 Ways to Feel Really, REALLY Good Without Alcohol or Other Drugs*, are a few suggestions for quick and easy “highs” adaptable for the classroom or home.

Breathe Your Stress Away

Breathing properly is the single most powerful thing you can do to relieve stress. This is because stress leads to shallow breathing, which deprives the brain of oxygen, which causes it to panic and flood the body with chemicals that make you feel *more* stressed, so you breathe *more* shallowly, your brain gets *less* oxygen, pumps more chemicals, you get more tense, less air, more chemicals, more stress, more stress, more stress,

MORE STRESS

MORE STRESS!!!

Deep breathing from your diaphragm supplies the brain with more oxygen, and lowers your heart rate and blood pressure. This reduces stress.

To improve focus, boost energy, or deal with an adrenaline-pumping predicament, practice this exercise. The more often you can do it, the better.

1. Sit up straight in a chair without armrests. Place your hands on your lap. Keep your feet flat on the floor. (You can also lie on your back on a carpet, blanket, or pad on the floor.)
2. Breathe in smoothly and deeply through your nose. Allow your abdomen and chest to expand and your shoulders to rise slightly. Visualize the air flowing into your lungs, chest, and abdomen.

3. S-l-o-w-l-y breathe out through your nose. Exhaling should take longer than inhaling.
4. Continue to breathe this way for at least a minute. Fill your lungs to capacity, but don't hold your breath or strain yourself. You want to find a rhythm that feels easy and natural.

The best highs come, not from a chemical substance, but from a way of life. While healthy highs are their own reward, teens who pursue them with passion may benefit twice-over by gaining recognition, academic success, a fulfilling career or life-long interest — even a gold medal at the Olympics.

Variation for Math Wizzes

1. Breathe in through your nose — a nice, deep, abdomen-expanding breath. As you exhale, think to yourself the word *ten*.
2. Breathe in.
3. Breathe out again. Think *nine*.
4. Breathe in.
5. Breathe out again. Think *eight*. (Are we beginning to see a pattern here?)
6. Breathe in.
7. Continue to count down with each exhalation until you get to zero.

You should now feel refreshed and more relaxed. If you don't, repeat the exercise. Show-offs may want to start at 20, or 50, or 100 and count down from there.

Sigh High

We usually sigh when we're feeling relieved, tense, disappointed, world-weary, or blue. A sigh is a respiratory lament. To get rid of sad breath:

1. Sit or stand up. Keep your spine straight.
2. Now *sigh*. Deeply and audibly. Let everything you're feeling escape with the air flowing out of your lungs.
3. Breathe in naturally.
4. Once again, sigh away the contents of your lungs.
5. Take 10-15 “sigh breaths.” You'll feel much calmer and better equipped to face the day.

The Laughing Cure

Here's a great way to start a class.

1. Everybody stand up straight.
2. Place your hands on your hips. Keep your palms facing up. (Your fingertips will point to the rear.)
3. Laugh. Laugh some more. Keep laughing. Let your laughter generate more laughter until your whole body is laughing. You are one laughing being.
4. Keep laughing for several minutes. When you're ready, stop.

Now everybody can clear their desks, stop talking, take out a pen, and begin the test.

Note: Laughing makes you feel better. Studies indicate that laughter actually decreases the body's levels of stress hormones and increases production of immunoglobulin (which helps fight infections) and so-called killer cells (which help the body fight viruses and cancers).

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How Stress-Resistant Are You? A Quiz

Read each of the following statements and decide if it applies to you.

Circle the number that corresponds to your answer.

1 = always 2 = most of the time 3 = sometimes 4 = rarely 5 = never

See the next page to interpret the results.

1. I eat balanced, nutritional meals.	1	2	3	4	5
2. I give and get lots of hugs and affection.	1	2	3	4	5
3. I do something fun at least once a week.	1	2	3	4	5
4. I am able to organize my time and meet deadlines.	1	2	3	4	5
5. I have enough money for my everyday expenses.	1	2	3	4	5
6. I practice deep breathing exercises.	1	2	3	4	5
7. I have one or more friends that I really enjoy and trust and can tell my innermost thoughts and feelings.	1	2	3	4	5
8. I can talk about my feelings when I'm upset.	1	2	3	4	5
9. I can discuss almost anything with my parents.	1	2	3	4	5
10. I have at least one parent or adult who lives with me (or nearby) that I admire and trust.	1	2	3	4	5
11. I get seven to eight hours of sleep most nights.	1	2	3	4	5
12. I avoid smoking cigarettes.	1	2	3	4	5
13. I drink fewer than three caffeinated beverages (sodas, coffee, tea) a day.	1	2	3	4	5
14. I avoid drinking alcohol.	1	2	3	4	5
15. I avoid using illegal or other mind- or mood-altering drugs.	1	2	3	4	5
16. I am in good health.	1	2	3	4	5
17. I exercise or play sports to the point of working up a sweat at least three times a week.	1	2	3	4	5
18. I participate in social activities.	1	2	3	4	5
19. I do something positive for myself every day.	1	2	3	4	5
20. I can ask for help when I need it.	1	2	3	4	5
21. I enjoy most of the things I do.	1	2	3	4	5
22. I find that there are a lot of interesting and exciting things to do in life.	1	2	3	4	5
23. I feel that I can handle most things that come my way.	1	2	3	4	5
24. I like myself, flaws and all.	1	2	3	4	5
25. When I make a mistake, I use the experience to grow and become a better person.	1	2	3	4	5
26. I derive faith and security from my religious and/or spiritual beliefs.	1	2	3	4	5
27. I meditate.	1	2	3	4	5
28. I use visualization and/or relaxation techniques.	1	2	3	4	5
29. I am able to "talk myself down" from self-defeating attitudes and worries.	1	2	3	4	5
30. I use a repertoire of healthy strategies (e.g., taking a hot bath, talking with a friend or trusted adult, reading, getting exercise), for dealing with stress	1	2	3	4	5

Interpreting Your Score

When you're through taking the quiz, total your score.

- If it's 75 or less, you're probably pretty stress-resistant. You use a combination of physical, mental, emotional, and interpersonal strategies to maintain a healthy lifestyle and support network.
- If your score is between 75 and 85, you're getting close to stress overload.
- If your score is over 90, you may be in the red zone of serious stress territory.

Dealing With Stress

There are healthy and unhealthy ways to deal with stress. "Type-A" people wear stress as a badge of honor. Aggressive and super-competitive, they want the world to know how overscheduled, hurried, pressured, counted upon, responsible for, and answerable to, they are. "Type-A" people can even get addicted to stress; they get a rush out of doing three things at once and racing from deadline to deadline. Not surprisingly, these are the folks who are most likely to end up with high blood pressure and heart disease.

Other people eat, drink, smoke cigarettes, guzzle coffee, pop pills, abuse drugs, seek thrills, watch TV, pound pillows, sleep, get sick, or go shopping to "deal" with stress. These types of distractions, avoidances, and coping mechanisms may have temporary effects that help you to forget your problems or feel more relaxed, energetic, or secure. But the effects are short-lived, and, invariably, these "solutions" backfire, creating more problems and more stress.

The only healthy way to deal with stress is to eliminate the cause, and/or reduce your vulnerability. When you do this, you experience the incredible high that comes from feeling calm, confident, and in control.

To increase your stress resistance, look at the items for which you gave yourself a 3, 4, or 5. Improvement in any of these areas will make you more resistant to stress. Don't try to work on all of these items at once. That will only add to your stress. Instead, pick one or two to start

with. For example, if you rarely eat balanced meals or do anything fun, make a point of having at least one healthy meal a day. Schedule at least *one* fun activity into your week. Once these become habits, move on to some of the other factors.

The only healthy way to deal with stress is to eliminate the cause, and/or reduce your vulnerability. When you do this, you experience the incredible high that comes from feeling calm, confident, and in control.

One of the first steps in dealing with stress is understanding the cause(s). You may want to keep a "stress journal" in which you list the daily hassles, ongoing pressures, and disturbing events or relationships that make you anxious. Then decide which ones you want to address.

You'll find that some of the stressors in your life can be eliminated simply by learning to say "no," changing your routine, or getting out of certain relationships. Others will require you to master specific skills to make yourself more stress-resistant. Many stress-reduction techniques have the fringe benefit of getting you high — just as many techniques for getting high have the fringe benefit of reducing stress.

Strategies for Low-Stress Living

The following strategies are excellent ways to deal with anxiety, hold your own against the world, and maintain and reinforce healthy living habits:

- Deep breathing
- Meditation
- Progressive relaxation
- Guided imagery and visualization
- Self-hypnosis
- Laughing
- Exercising
- Eating right
- Avoiding nicotine and caffeine
- Getting enough sleep
- Taking time for yourself
- Communing with nature
- Taking a long bath
- Going for a walk
- Expressing your thoughts and feelings
- Listening to music
- Finding things you enjoy and care about
- Creating connections in your life
- Building and using a support system
- Getting a pet
- Watching a sunset
- Climbing a mountain
- Singing a song
- Painting a picture
- Writing in a journal
- Being a mentor
- Visualizing a perfect place
- Trying something new
- Flying a kite
- Cooking a meal.

Back by Popular Demand!

Bestselling Books for Teens Available in Special Offer to FCD Donors

Last year's "Give a Gift, Get a Gift" book offer was so popular with our readers that we are repeating it. Only this time, for a \$50 donation to FCD, we will send you as our gift FCD president, Alex Packer's newest book for teenagers – **HIGHS! Over 150 Ways to Feel Really, REALLY Good Without Alcohol or Other Drugs**. And once again, Dr. Packer will inscribe each book with a personalized message.

For a donation of \$75, we'll send you your choice of any two of Dr. Packer's award-winning bestsellers for teens, including **How Rude! The Teenagers' Guide to Good Manners, Proper Behavior, and Not Grossing People Out**, and **Bringing Up Parents: The Teenager's Handbook**. And, so the adults don't feel left out, we are also making available for the first time one of Alex Packer's books for grownups, **Parenting One Day at a Time: Using the Tools of Recovery to Become Better Parents and Raise Better Kids**.

To take advantage of this offer, simply fill out the enclosed envelope, including the inscription instructions, and return it to us with your check, money order, or credit card information. We'll send you your autographed book(s) along with a receipt for tax purposes. And, if available, please don't forget to take advantage of your company's matching gift program.

For those of you looking to stock up on holiday gifts for kids, parents, and teachers, if you're willing to figure out the math, we're willing to send as many books as you like (e.g., three books for \$125; four books for \$150; 2,000 books for \$75,000!).

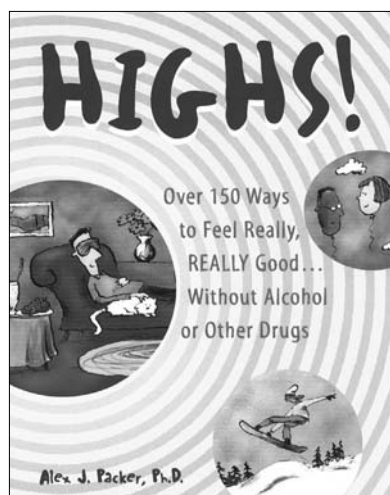
HIGHS! shows teens (and adults!) over 150 drug-free ways to get a rush, take a break, beat boredom, lower stress, have fun, and see the world differently. You'll find serenity highs, breathing highs, visual highs, healthy eating highs, adrenaline highs, nature highs, "connecting" highs, and social, spiritual, and creative highs. Highs that will thrill you, and highs that will soothe you. Highs that will take you deep inside yourself, and

waaaay outside. Highs that will change you forever without leaving you feeling dull, burned out, or hung over. These informed,

HIGHS! offers "...an amazing collection of things to do to live a better, fuller life. This is one of the best life skills books on the market, and it should be on every teenager's bookshelf."

School Library Journal

inspired, and occasionally loopy alternatives will satisfy the adolescent's natural penchant for experimentation, adventure, and escape – without the emotional, physical, and legal risks of alcohol and other drug use. **HIGHS!** also includes a wealth of interesting facts, nifty quotes, and comments and survey results from over 2,000 teens who share their favorite ways to relieve stress and escape reality. For those captivated by a particular high, the book contains resources and cool Web sites for finding out more.



What the critics say about...



How Rude! The Teenagers' Guide to Good Manners, Proper Behavior, and Not Grossing People Out

"From its intriguing title to the tongue-in-cheek ideas for dealing with many kinds of situations, teenagers will find this manual humorous, non-threatening, entertaining, and educational... [**How Rude!**] should be considered way ahead of any traditional etiquette book for young adults. They will return to it again and again." – *School Library Journal*

"Incredibly readable, enjoyable, laughable, enlightening, and insightful." — *Voice of Youth Advocates*



Bringing Up Parents: The Teenager's Handbook

"Alex Packer mixes generous doses of humor with good common sense in a practical book about family relationships that will have much to say to both teens and their parents. A 'starred review' and 'editors' choice' selection." *Booklist* magazine

"Highly recommended... [**Bringing Up Parents**] describes how to improve communication, avoid trouble, and solve conflicts in ways that bring out a parent's sensitive, accepting, generous, and supportive side... This book works." *KLIATT*



Parenting One Day at a Time: Using the Tools of Recovery to Become Better Parents and Raise Better Kids

"With expert advice and a fresh, down-to-earth approach, **Parenting One Day at a Time** covers many facets of family relationships: handling conflict, respect the needs and feelings of others, behaving morally and responsibly, [and] building trust and intimacy. Always supportive and nonjudgmental, the author offers a straightforward, compassionate, and vitally needed blueprint for raising children." *Hazelden*

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The Power of the Mind

These exercises, by illustrating the power of one's mind, can encourage children and teens to use their imaginations to visualize serenity, confidence, and achievement. Students can find or make their own visualization scripts and tapes for traveling to places of peace and security.

Bowling Balls...

1. Stand up straight. Feet slightly apart. Close your eyes.
2. Imagine that you are holding a bowling ball in your right hand.
3. The bowling ball keeps getting bigger and heavier. Bigger and heavier. Imagine that it is weighing you down and pulling you over.
4. After several minutes, open your eyes. Are you still standing up straight? Or did you lean to the right.

If you do this in class, students will be amazed at how many of their schoolmates are actually leaning.

...and Water Balloons

1. Stand up straight. Hold both of your arms out to your sides at shoulder level. Keep your palms down. Close your eyes.
2. Imagine that someone is tying a water balloon to your right arm. Feel the strain. Now, a second water balloon is being tied to your arm. And a third! You can barely hold up your arm under so much weight.
3. Now, imagine that a helium-filled balloon is being tied to your left arm. Your arm feels light and buoyant. A second balloon is tied. And a third. It lifts your arm higher and higher into the air.
4. Open your eyes. Have your arms moved from level? Did your right arm sink and your left arm rise?

Save Face

Most people don't usually think of their face and jaw when it comes to exercise. But let's face it, there are all sorts of pint-size muscles around your mouth, lips, eyes, and

forehead that can become strained and cause headaches, stiffness of the neck, and eye fatigue. For the ultimate "facial", practice these exercises whenever you have a few free minutes. Do them by yourself in front of a mirror. Or face-to-face with your best friend!

Open Wide

1. Relax your face.
2. Open your mouth as wide as it will go.
3. Stick out your tongue.
4. Open your eyes as wide as you can and try to focus on the tip of your tongue.

Eyes Wide Shut

1. Relax your face and close your eyes.
2. Scrunch up the muscles around your eyes. Hold for 10 seconds.
3. Relax the muscles and open your eyes wide. Hold for a count of 10.

Jaws

1. Close your mouth.
2. Gently move your jaw left to right 10 times.

Jaws II

1. Drop your jaw.
2. Open your mouth as wide as possible. Now close it.
3. Repeat 10 times.

Lazy Eights

Muscle and eye fatigue can plague students (and teachers!) throughout the day, making it difficult to concentrate and stay awake. Here's a quick exercise designed to reduce eye fatigue and help circulate oxygen north of the neck.

1. Sit up straight in a chair. Keep your feet flat on the floor. Relax your arms and place your hands in your lap. Close your eyes and pretend that your nose is a pencil. (Not that it *looks* like a pencil, that it *is* a pencil.)
2. Move your pencil, er, nose so you "draw" a large figure-8 in the air in front of you. Do this as one smooth, fluid, continuous motion. Repeat three times, then stop in the center of the 8.

3. Now trace the same figure-8 *backwards*. Repeat three times, then stop in the center.
4. Now turn the figure-8 on its side and draw a large version with your nose. Repeat three times, then stop in the center.
5. Draw three more sideways figure-8s, this time smaller.

Repeat steps 2-5 until you feel more relaxed or your head falls off, whichever comes first.

Finger Lifts

The index finger is one of your most handy and expressive digits. It is indispensable when it comes to nose-picking and doorbell-pushing. It's the appendage of choice for scratching a mosquito bite and cleaning out your belly button. As a communication device, it's the preferred extremity for pointing, beckoning, and admonishing. When licked and held upright, it will identify the direction of the wind. Because of its importance, the index finger must be kept in tiptop shape.

1. Make two fists and extend both index fingers.
2. Hold your fists out in front of you approximately 12" apart and 12" from your face so the index fingers point up.
3. On the count of 1, bend both fingers at the second knuckle to make a right angle.
4. On the count of 2, bend both fingers all the way down so the pad of each fingertip touches the base.
5. On the count of 3, return both fingers to the halfway position.
6. On the count of 4, extend both fingers back to their original upright position.
7. Repeat this exercise 10 times or until you feel too silly to continue.

FCD welcomes your comments, questions, and ideas. To learn more about anything in the newsletter, to send letters to the editor, or to submit a manuscript or proposal for an article, please contact:

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Layout: DeskTop Graphics, Printing: Bay State Press

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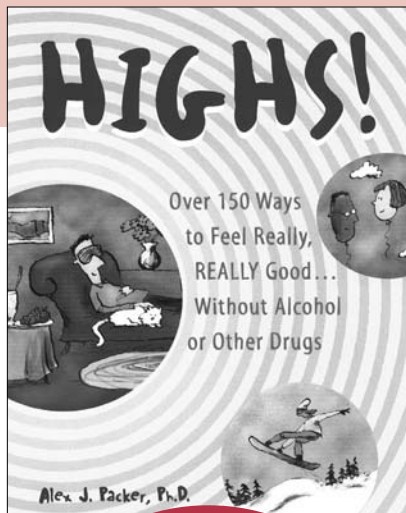
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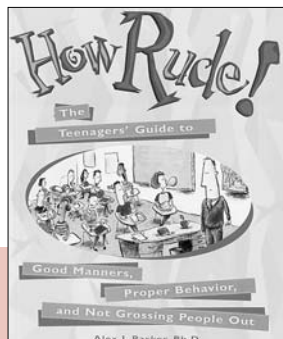
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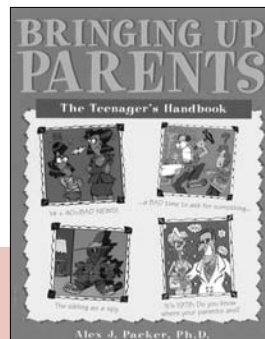
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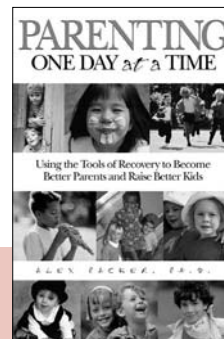
— *College Bound* magazine



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“A wonderful — and funny — handbook that can help teens get along with their parents and understand them better.”

— *Parade Magazine*



Parenting One Day at a Time:
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“Expert advice and a fresh, down-to-earth approach... a compassionate, and vitally needed blueprint for raising children.”

— *Hazelden*

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