SHINE FROM

Within®

10 TIPS FOR HEALTHY, HAPPY TEEN GIRLS

By Amanda Rootsey

"Amanda, thank you so much for providing such a beautiful space for our young girls to start their journey of self discovery. Mia was so thrilled to take part that on day one she walked out saying she would "never regret going". As the mother of a young girl I am grateful that amongst all the awful messaging out there for our girls, you are truly shining a bright light."

- Julia Dickenson (mother)

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1. STRESS-RELIEF + SELF-CARE RITUALS

Coping with stress is the number one personal concern for young people in Australia, alongside school or study problems. Young women in particular are increasingly overwhelmed with more than half saying they are either extremely or very concerned about coping with stress. (Mission Australia, Annual Youth Survey 2014). To get on top of this, we recommend that you sit down together and come up with a list of 'self-care rituals' that the teen girl in your life can do when feeling stressed, such as having a bath, going for a run or heading out for a juice with friends. To make it super easy to plan out your day, we recommend sitting down with a daily planner to list out your tasks and then prioritising them in order so that you can start with the MOST important task. As they say, 'eating your frog first.' You can download the daily planner, which even has a spot for your favourite inspirational quotes, here.

"I had so much fun at the course meeting new people and learning all new stuff!"

-Brydie Fuller 2013 Tweens Course student.

2. POSITIVE ROLE MODELS

Most parents would agree that children need to hear what their parents have been saying to them for months, from another source (as frustrating as that must be at times!). The most common phrase that comes out of parents' mouths after one of our courses is, "she just needed to hear it from someone else – thank you!" It takes a village to raise a child and the more positive role models and mentors that you can provide for your teen daughter, whether they are aunties, coaches, counsellors or teachers, the better.

"I've been meaning to contact you just to say thanks so much for the wonderfully balanced Personal Development course. It's great that she's seen such positive role models in you, Christine and the other experts involved. You have topped up her confidence right at a time when she will need to stay strong with the new school year.

Thank you."

- Leah, mother of a Personal Development Course student Jan 2016

3. GREAT GROUP OF FRIENDS

Friendships in the teen years can be like mini love romances – they are intense! Friendship "fires" occur, friendships change and it all seems to happen in a very dramatic fashion. Firstly, this is normal and it doesn't stay like this forever. However some friendships can be detrimental to the health and wellbeing of the girls involved. We hear it from our students time and time again and a good group of friends can make all the different in a young girl's life. To support your daughter through tough friendship 'fires' we recommend ensuring they have a couple of different groups of friends they can connect with, such as a sporting team, youth group or family friends. Giving them opportunities to learn about personal boundaries and communication skills can be very beneficial for teen girls as well. This can occur through educational courses like our Tweens Course or Personal Development Course or even out in the 'real world' through a part-time job.

4. HEALTHY FOOD

Food nourishes our bodies, our brains and has a direct impact on our moods. It's extremely important that teen girls are getting enough nutrients from fresh fruits and vegetables, nuts and seeds and 'whole' foods (rather than packets and processed foods). We LOVE getting in the kitchen with our students to make green smoothies, chat about healthy eating and encouraging them to get more involved in the kitchen. Have a look at our Resources page for a list of websites we love for recipes and inspiration.

5. EXERCISE

Moving the body, even if your teen girl is not a 'sporty' type is so important. It helps to detox the body through sweating, it releases endorphins which will make her feel relaxed and happy and is a fantastic way to relieve stress. If your daughter doesn't play sports, encourage her to find something that she enjoys, whether it's simply going for a walk on the beach, dancing in her bedroom with the music blaring or joining a yoga class.

"The program was brilliant and I highly recommend to parents for all girls. Amanda's empowering the girls to love and believe in themselves and take care of themselves and not get caught up in all of the hype, pressures and negative influences that they will be faced with in today's world. We are very fortunate to have had this course at our school and have such a caring and inspirational teacher like Amanda,"

-2015 parent of a primary school Stand Out Program student.

"It inspired me to feel more confident and brave about myself and I really enjoyed the course, it was amazing! My favourite subject was skincare because I enjoyed learning about our skin"

- Sahra, Tweens Course student in April 2016.

6. POSITIVE RELATIONSHIP WITH THEMSELVES

Body image is one of the top three personal concerns for young people aged 15-19 in Australia (Mission Australia, Annual Youth Survey 2014). With social media increasing the rate at which teen girls compare themselves with others, it's more important than ever to have discussions about body image and support them to see their strengths and feel great about themselves, no matter what they look like. Next time you are watching TV together or flicking through a magazine, start up a conversation about how beauty is portrayed in the media, highlighting the fact that all advertising is air-brushed and edited. What we see on TV, in magazines and even on social media isn't real – it's more like art, to be appreciated but not compared to.

7. ACTIVITIES TO BUILD CONFIDENCE

At this age teen girls are trying to figure out what makes them special and unique. The more opportunities you can give your teen to develop her confidence, learn something new and utilise her strengths, the better. This could be as simple as giving your daughter tasks to do at home, like making dinner, or could be enrolling her in a new hobby or course.

9. TECH DETOX

With the constant connection that we all feel, teens have to set boundaries around their phone use and, in particular, their social media use. Most of the current research suggests that parents should be active in setting these boundaries. Experts also suggest that parents need to start by setting a good example and ensuring they aren't spending too much time on their phones in their child's presence. Have a look at our blog post on the effects of social media including tips for your teen and even a video on how different Australian families put technology restrictions in place in their household.

10. NATURE

There is nothing quite as therapeutic as getting out in nature. If your daughter seems stressed and is 'pushing through' on an assignment, see if you can get her away from the computer and outside for a moment. It's amazing how fresh air and a break can rejuvenate the soul and allow fresh perspective and clarity to immerge.

Shine From Within have taught hundreds of teen and tween girls through their school-holiday courses, school-based workshops, mother-daughter events, sisterhood evenings and one-on-one mentoring. They are based on the Sunshine Coast, QLD Australia.

For expert interviews, current research and tips about supporting teens from the front line, tune into our brand new Youth Mentor Podcast!

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