



Warning!

Participating in this **Get totally Real!** project with your teenager will create positive life changes for both of you!

Possible side-effects include:

1. Solid, well-informed coaching of your child to build their successful future.
2. A stronger relationship with your teen.
3. Deeper understanding of yourself, your teen and your parenting goals and skills.
4. Improved knowledge of college and career pathways of the 21st century.
5. Many more because your teen's journey will be unique and so will yours!.

Be prepared to grow!

If you're reading this, it's likely because you made the wise decision to purchase **Get totally Real!** for a teenager in your life that you want to give concrete, guided opportunities to prepare for their best life. You may be homeschooling your teen or maybe a parent whose child is doing the project at school. You may be thinking, like all adults who have talked to me about this project, something like, "I wish I'd had this when I was a kid," or "I wonder what my life would be like now if I'd done something like this."

Know that there is a fair amount of reading to do, before you dive into the project and as you continue along. It isn't light reading. It's the kind that takes some thinking to fully absorb. Some people speculated that "parents won't take the time to do all this with their kids. Everyone's too busy...It's too much to read. "It's my hope that those people are wrong and that you see, we can't afford NOT to find time to do this work!

What this project offers both parent and teen is unique and invaluable, but it does take DOING and DOING takes time. This may cut into your free time, but it'll be time well spent and will absolutely benefit your entire family as you make your way along. Creating each lesson and discussing it with my own children changed all of our lives for the better. Of that I am certain! **Minimally, you should read through all the pages designed for parents and all the student lessons.** Even if you don't personally do all of the lessons as describe, you'll be better prepared to participate as your teen travels through and benefit more fully from the conversations that develop.

So where did this all begin? It seems like a majority of people skip along through childhood and then at some point think, "Wow, I'm an adult and this is my life." It seems like our generation and those past just lived our teenage years focused on getting through high school, and not much else was involved. We couldn't wait to become an adult, mostly so we could do things OUR way instead of the way our parents dictated. Some of us did think about our futures very carefully. Life seemed less complicated and our future's less uncertain than they are today for many reasons.

All parents want basically the same things for our children. We want them to have happy lives. Simple! Simple? Each of us define success differently and no matter how your child chooses to define it, it's a central part of happiness. Having lived awhile, we know that life is one challenge after another with every day bringing new things to deal with. It's the daily combination of good and bad that creates our realities, a culmination of our life experiences. We all want to protect our children from harm and hope they avoid painful mistakes that can negatively impact their lives. Some kids are willing to learn from our lives and some insist on doing everything their own way. We even want them to benefit from our wise choices, and perhaps make the same choices we did. Guiding them along and out into the world as functioning adults, is the greatest challenge of parenting. It's much harder than changing diapers and potty training! Perhaps you recognize that just wanting and hoping your child will build a successful life will not make it happen. Perhaps you realize, that after a very swift childhood, where we could easily control their world and project them, our begin taking control of their own lives, leaving us feeling all we can do is to hope, cheer, guide and advise from the sidelines, when they allow it!

Get totally Real! took 12 years to evolve. Hundreds of students participated and gave feedback before it was first published. Now it contains an powerful combination of thinking strands to have the greatest impact possible. I do NOT profess to be an expert of much but I do know for certain, from years of experience, that what they do in **Get totally Real!** gets and keeps them thinking much more than they would without it. It's designed to support all teens as they begin to make their transition from child to adult. This **Parent Companion** is designed to allow YOU inside the process. Since life is much more complicated than it used to be, we need better tools to do this job of parenting. While we can't be certain of how changes will impact their futures, we know our job is to help them prepare for whatever comes their way. This project is finally a solid compilation of what experts advise, research shows, my years of teaching and parenting experiences point to as a great starting place.

As **Get totally Real!** evolved, some people have asked, "Why do we have to do all this extra stuff for these kids? No one did it for us and we made it." The answers are really quite simple. Because of technology mainly, the world these kids will live in as adults really IS and will continue to be THAT different. We know that. As humans, THEY really are THAT different. They've been greatly influenced by technology, instant results, more visual stimulation, and access to incalculable amounts of information. They don't need to memorize things like previous generations needed to and they've not been raised to interact with others in the same ways. They spend much more time communicating, even if it's often silent through texting. All these things, and more, are creating slightly different kinds of people which **must** be acknowledged as we help them become the next generation of adults.

Because of these many changes, their lives are going to demand different thinking and coping skills. New careers and work opportunities are created constantly. How will we know if they're gaining skills required for success in occupations that don't even exist yet? Since we can't be certain of what their futures will demand, our responsibility **must** be to teach and empower them to think in multiple ways, be self aware, able to problem solve and be flexible in their abilities to learn, so they can adjust as they go. This kind of work must begin evolving into schools but can only be effective if supported and tightly woven into home life as well.

Once kids begin making their way into junior high school, parents usually become more concretely aware of and concerned with the responsibility of helping their kids make it out of the nest and into the big world successfully. **Get totally Real!** was built out of those deep concerns not being adequately addressed in any focused way or place in their lives. If you pay any attention at all to the constant debates about education and our ability to best prepare students for college and/or careers, it quickly becomes 100% apparent that we cannot continue to educate today's kids the same way, our parents and our grandparents, were educated! Everything else has changed dramatically, except education! Clearing out the buildings, training better teachers, throwing more money at the problems will not do the trick. Everyone **knows** there are major problems. Everyone is talking about it but what directions to head for improvement is not now and never will be simple. Our education system is a gigantic, tangled bureaucracy of politicians and administrators trying to make changes. In the meantime, we're losing millions of kids in the time gap! High school drop out rates are too high in a world where **68% of future jobs are predicted to REQUIRE at least some college education**. If our children aren't well equipped to deal with HOW all these factors, will effect their abilities to earn a living and raise families, we're all going to suffer the consequences of their struggles.

Get totally Real! was designed to lead them on a journey of thinking. With all the technology they consume, thinking about it all and analyzing it are skills they don't get enough guided practice doing. The teaching of thinking is tough, but this project takes them through thinking patterns that help them develop skills in ways they wouldn't in either regular academic courses or in their daily lives.

The first day of school I ask them to figure out how WHY is probably one of the most important words we have. They always come to the conclusion that if we ask and can answer the WHY of things, especially in learning, we gain much more than just an answer to memorize or an opinion to take as truth. We practice thinking patterns that go into answers working to explain WHY. I encourage my students to ask WHY often. It takes more time for the adults in their lives, however, if we're forced to answer, it benefits them in incalculable ways, to build capacity to think and make solid, well processed decisions for themselves.

Understanding **the purpose** of learning is rarely discussed anywhere. That may be why so many teens check OUT of school, or at least choose not to genuinely focus and learn. Adults know by life experience that it's essential to have basic math skills for example. If you think about it, teens must trust that they will need something in order to work to learn the things they're required to learn for graduation or college entrance. When the WHYs are not provided, teens tend to not trust or discount the value of things, deem them useless, and choose not to learn them. This generation doesn't follow blindly and quietly without question and require more of the WHY information so they will choose to build the capacity to be responsible for themselves, and see the value in being lifelong learners.

Most teens report they want to go to college. Most explain that they want to go because either their parents tell them they have to or because they want to get a 'good' job that pays 'a lot.' They know, long before high school, that more education usually translates into more money. Parents and high schools (unfortunately) focus more on getting them **into** college than preparing them to be successful, independent learners at that level, if and when they decide to go. Currently only about 30% of those who enter college in the U.S. leave with a degree, yet over 70% of adults attempt some kind of college. Clearly something's not working for the 40% who quit. Few report it's due to lack of money. Most report it's GREATLY due to lack of skills and/or stamina required to learn at that level. Many suggest things like finding their passions and focus for the future should be paid greater attention in high school to help them create the drive needed to make it through.

The newest research on employment shows that the future jobs that will pay middle-class wages or higher will **require the exact same skills that are necessary for college learning**. We have to make sure teenagers hear and UNDERSTAND that. Gone are the days, where someone can leave high school, with just the willingness to work hard physically and make a comfortable life for themselves and a family, in any modern society.

So, we have a gargantuan problem that any high school teacher can describe. We have kids who often very unmotivated to learn **what** we're forced to teach, in the manner we're forced to teach it, yet education has NEVER been more connected to earning potential than it is now and will be in their lifetimes. We have kids who've grown-up in a world where they're constantly entertained and wired for short periods of attention. That entertainment has lead them to believe that success is often instant, easy and often caused by luck. For many, from what they've seen, life looks so easy! These kids have been raised in the most lucrative times in history, so they feel little sense of urgency to do the hard work that is required to build successful futures. Without the **skills to learn independently** and the **genuine DESIRE to persevere through challenges** that they'll absolutely face in college and workplace learning, a great deal of money, time and effort are at risk of being wasted.

In **Get totally Real!** teens come to find that true **desire** is the first step to fulfill goals. They begin to realize that there are TOOLS used that adults know exist to create success. The problem is those are NOT regularly, if ever, discussed enough in any concrete or conscious fashion. They need to come to realize that success takes a lot of effort including solid, well-developed communication skills, reasoning, decision making, problem solving, positive attitudes and intrinsic motivation. The **Get totally Real!** journey is like letting them look inside the adult brain, to see what solid thinking looks and sounds like. **Get totally Real!** gives them a unique opportunity to develop the skills of success consciously and deliberately, rather than just hoping they'll figure it out or get lucky. Those are really the only other options and don't offer great odds!

The goal that started it all was giving them WHYS of what and how they learn, REAL information about adult life, like salaries and cost of living, and to help them find their PASSIONS, so education won't be seen as something to merely endure. Those who desire great lives must realize that a high school diploma is no longer optional. Being able to work with their brains is what future lives will be built upon. If they gain a solid foundation of skills, college and careers are more likely to be successful for them. It's just that simple!




This **Parent Companion** is identical to the teen version, except this one contains **Parent Pages** with things for you to consider from the adult perspective to be best prepared to help them get the most out of their experience. If they're doing this project at school, this allows you to have real, concrete connections to discuss about it all rather than the common, awkward parent-teen conversations like, "What'd you do or learn in school today?"... "Nothing."

There are links on the **Extras** page of our website that include a list of thought provoking video clips geared for each section. In my classes, we watch, read, think, and/or journal on blank pages in the back of their book, to focus them on the subject or topic we're about to do in **Get totally Real!** This helps start conversation, as well as focus their possible prior knowledge and life experiences in the right direction. Many of my student's parents report that their teen comes home more enthusiastic about school, and with much more to talk about than before they started **Get totally Real!** You'll now have the same information they get from their lessons, whether they're doing it at home or school. This can open more doors for communication on powerful topics than would normally come up in daily life.

The choice is up to you how much or how little, and with what parts you wish to use and interact. Please note that each **Parent Page** has explanations for **WHY** they're doing what they're doing. It also offers some suggestions about how to best interact with them and the content. After 12 years of trial and errors with teens and this curriculum, I notice most get much more out of it ALL with simple support and thoughts from conversation before, during and after the lesson, than they do on their own. Be assured that I am in NO way telling you how to raise your teen or that you will agree with my suggestions, I'm just offering ideas that I've found work well with my students. Check out my free parent resource website: www.4parentswithteens.com and the **Extras** page on www.getrealllearning.com

NOTE!

All **Parent Pages** have the same border as this box. 
Because these have been added directly into the student version, the **assignment page #'s in your book are different than student assignment page #'s** referenced in the Table of Contents or in actual lessons.
In other words, the Table of Contents in both versions references the **STUDENT** page #'s. The **Parent Pages** reference page #'s in **THIS** version.
The order of assignments are the same, so it shouldn't cause confusion.
The next page lists all the **Parent Pages** and the **student** pages covered.