

# School's In Session: The Awesome Mom Philosophy

The 3 Rs... Rules. Responsibility. Rapport.

- ◆ Are You an Awesome Mom?
- ◆ Why This Book Is Different
- ◆ By The Time You Finish This Book
- ◆ Your Own Mini-Pep Rally

I love teenagers, with their flashes of brilliance, their occasional bravado, and the vulnerability that underlies it all. They are magnificent WIPs — Works In Progress — who vacillate between shining with extreme cockiness, to freaking out over a pimple. Sarcasm is a teenage pastime. Every teenage emotion is magnified. Any negative expression within eyeshot is a personal insult. Instant joy is just a word away. So is immediate devastation.

My name is Deborah Davis and I'm a teacher. Armed with a tenth-grade sense of humor, a BS in Science, a M.Ed. in supervision, and certification as a Personal Trainer, I taught grades 7-12 for more than 30 years, along with coaching basketball, cross country, and cheerleading. To insure their success, I worked very hard to find solutions to my students' academic problems. Together, the students, parents, and I strategized how to keep the students on track, or how to get them back on track when they drifted off course.

“  
I was Mommy...  
and I was in way  
over my head.  
”

Sometimes as a high school teacher I felt like *School Mommy*, so I was completely blindsided when, as a new mom with ten years of teaching under my belt, I discovered that being a teacher and a mom were not the same thing. Faced with my tiny dynamo of a

daughter, to my surprise—and distress—I realized I needed to shift gears. I was no longer the caring, but objective educator of teens; I was Mommy ... and I was in way over my head.

Thank goodness she learned to talk.

## **Are You an Awesome Mom?**

## After Final Exams: 20 Ways to Factor in Fun

The 3 R's... Reflection. Recreation. Reexamination.

- ◆ So Far, So Good: Let's Review
- ◆ The Fun Factor
- ◆ Final Exams: (The *After* Part Of Before-and-After)
  - ◆ Homework: Awesome Daughter Post-Assessment
- ◆ Your Own Mini-Pep Rally
- ◆ How Did You Do?

**T**he objective of this book, and perhaps the reason why you picked it up, is to help you make your way to a loving, healthy, productive relationship with your daughter. Simply wanting a better relationship is about as effective as wishing on a star. Instead, you've chosen to be proactive by exploring strategies and solutions that could benefit you and your daughter. That's what makes you an Awesome Mom, even on the days when you don't feel so awesome.

I've packed a huge amount of information into this book, but the one point I will continue to emphasize is that you never had to be a perfect mom to be one of the Awesome Moms. You *are* an Awesome Mom. You continuously try to make positive changes, to implement the best strategies for you and your family, and to resolve the issues straining your relationship with your special girl. That's why you're awesome!

“  
Awesome Moms aren't perfect, but, we're Awesome, and that's way better!  
”

No one in a relationship is perfect, even under the best circumstances. You constantly have to adjust to each other, to new rules, to fluctuating hormones, and to the pressure and angst you each bring in from the outside world as different people affect your lives.

Did I mention Awesome Moms aren't perfect? I did? Well, we're not. But we're Awesome, and that's way better.

Now, complete this sentence:

Awesome Daughters aren't \_\_\_\_\_.

(I'll give you a hint. It begins with "P".)

You guessed it! They aren't perfect, either. They're Awesome. And you knew that she was awesome the day she was born.

Relationships have to be maintained for them to blossom and grow. A strong healthy relationship is a moving target, dynamic in nature. What works today may not work tomorrow. They don't become static until you give up on them.

But you're not going to give up on your relationship with your adorable adolescent, no matter what, because you're awesome, and because she needs that relationship. And, she needs you—healthy, vibrant, and moving along your continuum of life. Living within a healthy relationship will teach your growing girl how to have a healthy relationship with someone else. Remember, she watches everything you do and say, and models her behavior after you. Why? Because she knew you were awesome the first time she opened her eyes and gazed into yours.

“  
"A strong, healthy relationship is a moving target, dynamic in nature."  
”

## So Far, So Good: Let's Review

Let's review what we've covered in our Awesome Mom "school day" together. You began with a Pre-Assessment of your relationship, which will be used later to mark the changes in your journey since you started this book. From there, you examined pressures affecting the two of you, and subsequently impact your relationship. If you tried all the activities, here are some of your key takeaways:

- ◆ The illusions of the **Guilt Myth** the **Supermom Myth**, and the **Plenty Of Time Myth** have been dispelled.
- ◆ You and your daughter understand about how the undeveloped teenage brain impacts your interactions.
- ◆ You now have a couple of quick stress release methods, and are incorporating them into your daily routine.
- ◆ As you went through the chapters, you collected strategies—against peer pressure, to help self-image, for healthy lifestyle changes, for compromise and negotiating—and in the process, you’ve gathered lots and lots of Conversation Starters to help you approach your daughter.
- ◆ You held up a mirror to your lifestyle, and in the reflection, you are analyzing the example that you are setting for your developing daughter *without guilt or self-blame*.
- ◆ Patience has replaced negative perceptions as you now recognize the importance of taking baby steps when forming good habits, and the importance of setting and enforcing limits, because of their long-term impacts. You’ve stopped sprinting and are now developing a pace more fitting for the marathon.
- ◆ The steps you’ve taken to shield you and your daughter from the toxicity of chemical food additives, white sugar/flour in processed foods, caffeine, cigarettes, alcohol, and drugs, are beginning to improve both your bodies and minds, and are positively impacting your relationship.

Most importantly, the lines of communication are expanding between the two of you. If you have gone through the homework, your glorious girl is starting to perceive you differently. Her faith in you is on the rise, and the pressures on your relationship are decreasing. Perhaps it’s a little easier to engage her in conversation, or maybe her outbursts are less intense. In whatever manner the difference is being expressed, you and your touchy teen are acting like a team more often, and find yourselves on opposing sides less frequently.

*Wow! You go, Girl!*


It’s time to add the Fun Factor to all that hard work. You both deserve it.

## The Fun Factor

Let's take a break and have some fun before your **Final Exams!** Think back to an activity you used to do together that your dauntless daughter loved when she was younger. Who initiated those good times? It was awesome you! It's time for you to pick up the gauntlet again. Take a break from all this learning and go have some fun!

The objective here is to pick something *you* have never done before so both of you will be a little unsure and inexperienced. Shared vulnerability has a better chance of creating a judgment-free zone where the outcome has nothing weighing in the balance.

Time to initiate another conversation.

 **Say This:** "Remember when we used to \_\_\_\_\_ ? I sure enjoyed having fun with you. What do you say we take off, just the two of us? We should try something neither of us has ever done before. I have a great idea ..."

 **Do This: Try It. You'll Like It!**

In case you don't actually have a great idea, here's a dozen you can use:

1. Visit an aquarium, a butterfly farm, or interactive science museum.
2. Try an escape room or a puzzle room. They put you in a room filled with clues. You race against the clock to see if you can figure the way out before they open the door.
3. Challenge yourself at a zip line adventure park or an obstacle course.
4. Attend a Renaissance Faire. They hold them all over the country. Don't forget your costume.
5. Take a cooking class at *Sur La Table*. Some are specifically designed for kids.
6. Join a 1-day art class. They teach you how to create one masterpiece, which you take home at the end of the class. Choose your medium: paint, clay, etc.
7. Get a recipe for a completely foreign meal and prepare it together.
8. Choose a new bike trail and see the world up close and personal.

9. Take a drumming class, or Zumba, or dance fitness class together (so much fun!)
10. iPhone photography – Pick a theme and collect pictures on your phone. I have a friend who takes pictures of “lone” gloves. I have another friend who takes pictures of unique teacups she finds in thrift stores. I take pictures of bunches of random red cars parked next to each other (for no particular reason).
11. Find a uniquely themed restaurant. The staff at the Victor Café in Philadelphia consists of all opera singers who burst into song throughout the evening. The Medieval Manor in Boston provides a romp through the Dark Ages with a six-course meal. The Vienna Restaurant and Historic Inn in Southbridge, MA is an entirely Bavarian setting. The Crop Bistro & Bar is in a converted bank in Cleveland. Find something in your area by researching “themed restaurants.”
12. Volunteer at the pound to walk dogs or help groom them. See if you can help them find homes. Many people who can’t own a dog or cat full time opt to foster them for a while in their homes.

Now, don’t just read about it. Go have some fun! Schedule something with your cheeky cherub right now!

Your teachable teen needs help along her journey. The question is, from where will that help come? From you? From her teenage world? How about from both?

What better way to connect than to have fun together? All those good times you remember sharing with your daughter had something in common. Do you know what it was?

You weren’t fighting.

Set your intention to create pockets of time where you can explore fun activities together, and if you avoid conflict along the way, so be it.

Don’t forget to include your Support Team in the fun. Here are some group suggestions from one of my *Ultimate Girl Guides* for teenagers.