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Family & Relationships

Tag, You're It! 50 Easy Ways to Connect with Young People
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To many of today's adults, teenagers are frightening creatures. With teen crime, addiction, and violence rising rapidly, it's no surprise that many adults shy away from teens other than their own (and, sadly, some do turn away from their own). According to this book, however, today's teens crave adult attention and guidance more than ever.

A user-friendly manual with quick tips for connecting with young people, this book is broken into short chapters, with suggestions for the practical application of each tip. The title refers to the need for adults to stay in contact, or in the game, with teens who need attention, whether family members or not. The author, who has worked for publishers of the Houston Chronicle, has won an editorial award at McGraw-Hill Companies. The parent of teenagers, she asserts that adults must be asset builders-people who purposefully invest time and energy in teens who, according to research by the Search Institute, long for adults to notice and like them.

How can adults build such assets? Some of Kimball-Baker's suggestions are easy to implement: simply offer a smile to a teen in passing, or show up at sports or performance events. Others are more difficult, but just as valuable, such as being less judgmental and forgiving lapses in behavior. The author's breezy yet authoritative style makes the book not only easy to read, but enjoyable. Each chapter is short and concise, and they don't have to be read in order, making this an ideal book for time-pressed but concerned adults. The author's passion and compassion for her topic is clear, and she draws the reader into her sympathetic view with observations like: "Even if you were a teen who was [seeing] … a raft of specialists for these problems or were on probation for something, you would still need friends in your life, right? Try not to think of yourself as a problem-fixer. Consider yourself a friend-that's all, and that's plenty."

The ease of reading and the practicality of the tips makes this book a valuable addition to the library of parents, neighbors, teachers-anyone who has any encounters with teenagers. The

book’s positive attitude is a refreshing change from the despair permeating the media concerning the dangers facing teens. Above all, it offers hope for the future of today’s teens.