
**About the author:** Debra W. Haffner, M.P.H. (Masters in Public Health), is an educator and author, and the director of the Religious Institute on Sexual Morality, Justice, and Healing. At the forefront of sexuality education for more than twenty-five years, she served for twelve years as president and CEO of SIECUS, the Sexuality Information and Education Council of the United States. She has written four books, including *From Diapers to Dating, What I’ve Learned about Sex*, with Dr. Pepper Schwartz, and *Exploring the Dimensions of Human Sexuality* with Jerrold Greenberg and Clint Breuss [from the book jacket].

**Summary:** Haffner, writing for the parents of adolescents (aged 12-21), suggests that they establish “teachable moments” through regular family discussions about sex. The author encourages parents to get over the shock that their children are sexual beings and urges them to think of their children as people. She encourages parents to help their kids stay healthy, which in the end, is what matters most. Haffner understands that discussing sex with adolescent children is difficult, but such talks must be done. Experienced at having such talks with diverse adolescent groups, Haffner knows that teens are curious but ignorant. Parents who are well-informed and can share the basic facts with their teens will do much to keep them safe from unintended consequences such as pregnancy.

The book contains six chapters, which move chronologically through the middle school, early and later high school, and the late adolescent years. Haffner’s message to parents is straightforward: keep communication in the family alive, share your values with your child, and listen, listen, listen. Haffner practices what she preaches—proof is in the book’s foreword, written by her 16-year-old daughter, who says, “it is good to know that I can talk to my mom about anything. Most of my friends don’t feel comfortable enough to talk to their parents at all about sexuality. The majority of them were given a book when they turned 12” (xiii). Haffner encourages parents to think back to their own adolescence—fairly standard advice in most parenting books—but she also encourages parents to think of their teens as people first, and to respect them and the decisions that they make. Teens that feel respected are most likely to want to talk with their parents. And talking prevents a lot of problems.

**Reviewer** Jennifer Nelson has worked in education as a curriculum designer and book editor. She is a former student in the teaching certification program and has done volunteer work as a counselor for incarcerated adolescents.