
**About the author:** Janet Edgette, a clinical psychologist, maintains a private practice in the Philadelphia area. She has been providing services to children, adolescents, adults, couples, and families for 15 years. She speaks nationally to mental health professionals on adolescent therapy and teaching effective parenting strategies and has written for several professional publications including Family Therapy Networker.

**Summary:** Describes how teenagers neutralize their parents’ authority, why parents back down, overindulge their teens, and thereby lose credibility. But, parents can help their teens become responsible people. Six ways that parents can influence their teenagers are described. Three cultural myths about teens contribute to parents’ tolerance of inappropriate teen behavior and reluctance to confront and discipline their teens, according to Edgette. These myths suggest that teens’ moodiness should be excused, that they do not like to talk about sensitive issues with their parents, and that they need freedom to learn how to make decisions. Setting clear limits and holding children accountable for their behavior through consistent and fair discipline will help them grow into responsible adults.

**Reviewer** Laura Gilbertson earned a masters of science in public health from the University of Illinois, and is a former graduate student in the M.S. Ed. Counseling program at Northern Illinois University. Gilbertson has experience providing psychosocial assessments and referrals for adolescents accessing services at a county health department’s family planning program.