



[Stop Parenting and Start Coaching](#)

By Carol Carter, Gary Izumo and Joe Martin

★★★★☆ (4 stars)

Buy this book if you:

- *Want to learn to apply the coaching approach to parenting*
- *Coach people who are struggling with how to parent teens*

Stop Parenting and Start Coaching takes the coaching approach and applies it to the process of working with your own teenage children. In addition to talking about how coaching skills (like listening and asking) can be used to improve family communication, the book gives you a picture of how the heart of coaching (things like believing in people, focusing on them and not yourself, and seeing people according to their dreams) can become a vital addition to your parenting style.

What You'll Learn

The book uses a dialog approach to demonstrate what coaching looks like. A father (Greg) feels that he is losing his teenage daughter Kelly, and begins meeting with a coach to learn how to change his communication strategy and dial down the conflict. The dialogs between Greg and his coach are very good, and bring in many key coaching principles such as helping people take responsibility for their own lives, getting beyond your own agenda to find the other person's heart, using questions to draw the person out, etc. I think they will be genuinely helpful for many parents.

The idea of "Stop Parenting" is that parents tend to be tellers. "Don't do that!" or "That's the rules, and you just need to follow them!" are the kind of unilateral statements that get ingrained in your parenting style when your kids are young. However, that approach doesn't go over well with teens who are anxious to take more responsibility for their lives, and that's where the "Start Coaching" part comes in. The book emphasizes themes like learning to really listen to your kids dreams and loving them by helping them become who they are instead by making them follow the rules. The authors talk a lot about getting buy-in, using questions to draw out a person's real motives and intent, getting beyond your own frustrations to love your child well, and giving them what they need in a conflict instead of getting what you need by venting or becoming angry.

I have a few quibbles with the book (like always, if you read my reviews!) While the book includes a lot of dialog, most of the conversations are between the coach and the

parent, instead of the parent and the child. I would like to have seen more examples and more specific techniques for how to do a parent-teen coaching conversation. Also, what the authors call a coaching approach is actually a combination of coaching and mentoring. While real parents are generally going to be using both these approaches, it would help for the authors to be more clear on the difference between coaching, sports coaching and mentoring behaviors. Since the book is only 100 pages, I'll hope that in the next addition the authors flesh these two things out.

And keep in mind that this is a secular book – the level of anger and rebellion in teens that the authors assure us is normal may not seem normal at all to Christian families. You'll also need to translate the examples that touch on drinking, dating or partying into ones that make sense in your family value system.

Summary

Parenting teens and relating to adult children is an area where coaching has great application – I'm surprised that so little has been written on it to date. This book is a good start. It lays out what coaching can do and the difference it makes, and starts the process of helping coaches apply the principles they've learned to the parenting process. Any parent who struggles to communicate with teens, and any coach who works with them, will benefit from this book.

Reviewed by:

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