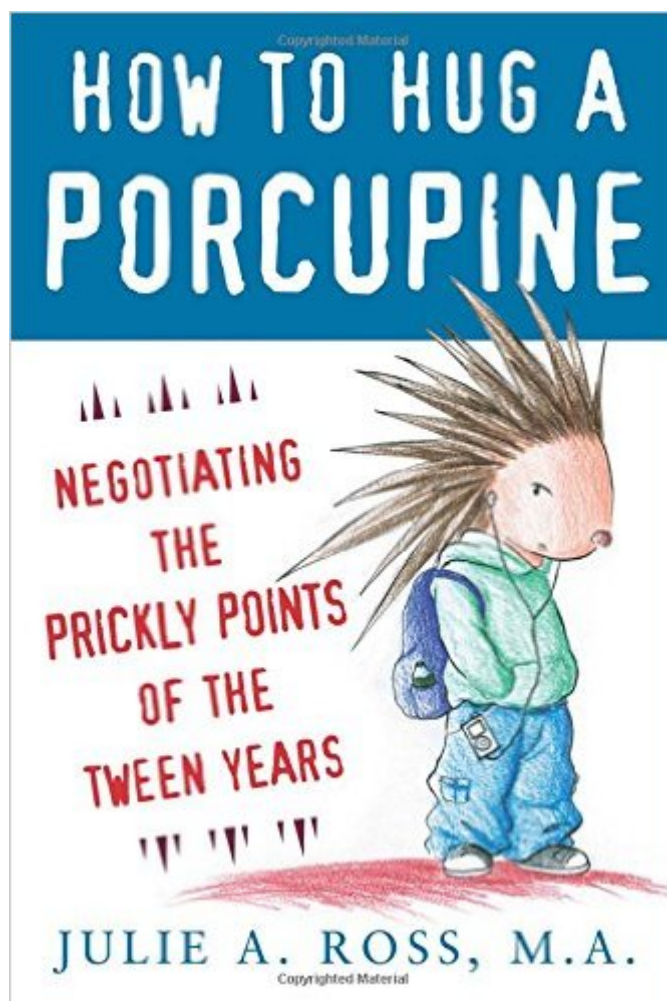


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# How To Hug A Porcupine: Negotiating The Prickly Points Of The Tween Years



## Synopsis

• You never listen to anything I say!  
• Yesterday, your child was a sweet, well-adjusted eight-year-old. Today, a moody, disrespectful twelve-year-old. What happened? And more important, how do you handle it? How you respond to these whirlwind changes will not only affect your child's behavior now but will determine how he or she turns out later. Julie A. Ross, executive director of Parenting Horizons, shows you exactly what's going on with your child and provides all the tools you need to correctly handle even the prickliest tween porcupine. Find out how other parents survived nightmarish tween behavior--and still raised great kids  
Break the nagging cycle,  
• give your kids responsibilities, and get results  
Talk about sex, drugs, and alcohol so your kid will listen  
Discover the secret that will help your child to disregard peer pressure and make smart choices--for life  
"This excellent book lets parents peek into the underlying, confusing thoughts and perplexing decisions that young tweens are constantly facing."  
--Ralph I. L'Abate, M.D., Clinical Professor of Pediatrics, Cornell University, and author of The Teen Health Book

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

If you are a parent thinking ahead, or wondering how to handle issues (and when), this book is just what you need. It isn't a "how to" - it is a "here is the perspective you need to make your own decisions". While every example obviously won't suit your family situation, you will be getting a real dose of reality about the issues your children and their friends (and their friends' families) will be dealing with. Ms Ross approaches every issue with common sense and clear thinking. In several cases, I couldn't see myself handling the issues the way they were handled in the examples, but

seeing how someone handled them is invaluable in thinking about what might be best in your family. The sections on drugs and sex were especially valuable for two reasons: 1) the advice was clear and sensible, and 2) if you think you can skirt the issues, or avoid tackling them head-on, you won't after you read this book - as Ms Ross guides you through the issues and various ways to handle them, she also makes clear exactly what is at stake for your child and his or her personal safety and happiness. If you are a concerned parent, you will find this highly intelligent book filled with thoughtful advice and interesting perspective on how other parents in this generation are dealing with this generation's issues. I've read lots of advice books, and none of them are perfect. But this is the one that left me with the clearest plans for dealing with critical Tween issues. Parenting isn't about reading a book and doing what it tells you - it's about understanding issues, and figuring out how to deal with them in a way that best suits you and your children. Ms Ross' book is a wonderful resource for intelligent, thinking parents.

This is an extraordinary book which will change the way that I think about and relate to my child. The book's premises are that pre-adolescents and adolescents in the years of middle school are like the chrysalis of a butterfly, struggling to change but susceptible to damage if handled too much or in the wrong way, and that communication which creates a trusting relationship enables the teenager who eventually emerges to make healthy choices. The strengths of the book are the care with which it details specific forms of communication which will and will not create this relationship based on case histories of parents and adolescents. I found it compelling because it was able to take highly personal situations and put them in a perspective that persuaded me to see my own child's behavior in new ways. Ross presents a significant amount of research on such topics as substance abuse, sexual practice and internet use but weaves the research so gracefully through case history that the book is accessible, lively and clear to the general reader while still making a theoretical contribution to theories of personality.

Ok, so the author does include a few useful tips, like strategies for projecting empathy, but nothing that was news if you have been reading any books on this subject. The things that drove me absolutely insane, however, were 1) the condescending tone used throughout (parents, you are idiots!); 2) the repeated assertion that growing up today is so different from when we grew up that we cannot possibly understand the stresses on our children (say what??!); and 3) imbecilic examples. Let me elaborate on my third complaint using illustrations from the book regarding how a parent should handle a child's desire for ear-piercing. The parent who said no to piercing was

rewarded with a child who got a full arm tattoo instead--message, saying no is a mistake. The parent who secretly wanted her daughter to wait until age 16 to pierce the ears did not tell the daughter this--instead, she said to the girl, "I am not ready yet, let's revisit this issue in six months." Somehow she was able to continue this strategy over a period of years!!! How did this child not catch on? And this kind of subterfuge was given as the example of how to handle a conflict!The message of most of the examples in the book--either say yes to everything, because you can't possibly understand what your child is going through, or lie outright to avoid the conflict--does not provide an example of the kind of parenting strategies that I would like to pursue. And given the condescending tone, I'd only pick this one up if you want to give your blood-pressure a hefty surge. My copy went in the give-away box in case there are parents out there devoid of both common sense and self-esteem.

I really liked this book. The message: you really cannot control your kids in high school...thus, middle school is a good time to focus on guiding vs controlling and making sure your relationship stays strong so they will come to you when they have challenges in high school. How to do that without being a push-over and still having limits is the core of the book. Lots of very specific ideas about how to interact with tweens. And a super helpful caterpillar/crysilis analogy that I found eye-opening. I found the book really helpful, and highly recommend it. I just bought a copy to give to my mom to help grandma think about new ways to interact with her tween grandkid.My only caveat would be to take the last couple chapters with a giant grain of salt, as they are outdated. It would be ideal if the author updated the book. The chapter on technology references Myspace and Friendster, which gives you some idea of how dated the book is (were they still relevant even in 2008?). And the chapter on sex ed suggests, albeit reluctantly, that it might be OK for parents with religious concerns about homosexuality to tell their gay tweens/teens that it's OK to be gay as long as you live your life without ever acting on those feelings. At best, an anachronistic message.But...there is so much good advice about interacting with your tween in this book. Just give those sections a pass to gather the gold in the other chapters.

I read lots of parenting books (I'm a librarian) and this was one of the best I could find on parenting tweens. I just finished reading the library's copy but now I'm going to buy my own. Highly recommended.

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