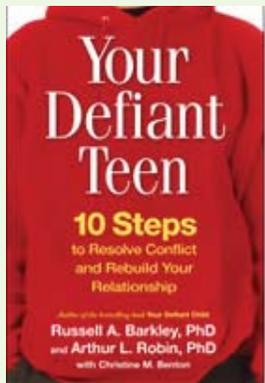


## Your Defiant Teen: 10 steps to Resolve Conflict and Rebuild Your Relationship - by Russell Barkley, PhD

The dominant paradigm for understanding and addressing behaviour sometimes associated with developmental or learning disabilities (autism, ADHD, etc) says that the child will be helped by medication and behavior modification. Sometimes, however, the medication has unacceptable side effects, and/or the behaviour “mod” backfires and seems to result in deterioration of the parent child relationship.

This creates skepticism and parents may become dismissive of any further advice from advocates of the dominant paradigm. Dr. Russell Barkley is a renowned expert in ADHD and a proponent of the dominant paradigm. He is also co-author, along with Dr. Arthur L. Robin, of “Your Defiant Teen”. Having developed my own skepticism that the dominant paradigm was too simplistic, I approached this book warily.



The book is aimed at a general audience, with the understanding that often defiant behaviour may be linked to learning or developmental problems. There are many excellent suggestions and depending on your history with your child up until they became a teen, you will pick and choose what sounds reasonable. Contracts with points systems to earn privileges may not be for you, but even if this is the case, you can still pick up some great information from the book. For example, step one in the book is making positive one-on-one time a habit. The authors give excellent suggestions here with regard to minimizing or eliminating triggers for conflict for teens. Something as simple as asking too many questions will set off many teens, as they see this as controlling or an invasion of their privacy.

There is emphasis throughout the book on putting a lot of thought into your parenting and the approach you plan to take. For example, there is a good discussion on knowing the difference between rights, gifts and privileges when you are determining consequences for behaviour. As a parent it is reasonable to remove, or require the earning of privileges, but not gifts or rights. The authors also encourage reflection on your parenting style, on how your own stress may impact your relationship with your teen, and on thinking ahead to what issues are most important and whether you will have the energy to implement the consequence you are considering. They emphasize the need for clarity in communicating as well as being positive and offer good ideas on how to encourage communication. They also offer very concrete approaches using contracts, of which they provide several examples.

I have no reservations about recommending this book. My initial reluctance, which is a result of my own experience with “reward” type systems, was assuaged, and I was won over by the books emphasis on positive relationship building. For some, this book could be the answer to all their parenting challenges while for others, it will give some good clear reminders and ideas. Either way, this book offers something for everyone who is struggling with their child’s behaviour.

**This book is available in the Behaviour section of the Reach specialized book lending library.**