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FOREWORD

Dear Teen Reader,

Being a teenager is an exciting – and confusing – time. You feel on top of the world one day, and down in the dumps the next. You feel self-confident one day, only to be greeted by self-doubt the next. You look in the mirror and feel quite sure that you are positively looking like hot stuff and then, before you know it, your great-hair day, your radiant complexion and your good mood take a drastic U-turn. Who needs it?

Adolescence is like that. But no one needs to tell you about the pros and cons of being a teen. So instead, let me tell you a little about the author of this book. Her name is Jennifer Leigh Youngs and she is my daughter. When she was born, she looked and behaved like most babies: she was cute, had very wrinkled skin, scowled a

lot, and her screaming for food terrified the family dog. I love her beyond words and have always wanted the best for her, but even so, she had to deal with life like everyone else: day-by-day.

She was a cute little girl, but by fourth grade was feeling “oblong and ugly.” Having looked like Cinderella throughout much of her childhood, she wondered out loud how nature could have dealt her such a cruel blow. Now she was gangly and uncoordinated, her facial features were elongating and filling out – and not all at the same time. She was really upset about it. She complained and complained, and no reassurance on my part could appease her.

One day Jennifer and I were going through a box of old pictures and came across all my childhood pictures that my mother had kept for me. Jennifer was very interested in these old photos – one more so than the others. The particular photo that caught her attention was one of me with an extraordinarily goofy grin on my face, oversized front teeth and the two on either side of them missing. As she described it, I looked like the “Ultimate Geek.” She flipped the photo over and there,

in my mother's beautiful handwriting, was, "Bettie in fourth grade." My daughter rolled on the floor with laughter!

With a better understanding that a picture is worth a thousand words, I gathered up my childhood photos, arranged them in a year-by-year chronology, then had them put into one large frame. I hung this array of photos in the hallway outside her room. My daughter visited these photos quite often over the years, especially when she was in her teens. I have no doubt that they helped her accept that with each year comes a new and different "look" – and perhaps helped her gain a little tolerance for all the changes she was going through, both physically and emotionally. At least I'd like to think so.

One day when she was in the tenth grade, my daughter asked, "Mom, when you were a sophomore, did anyone ask you to the junior-senior prom?" I thought she was warming up to ask me if she could accept a date to go to the junior-senior prom. But, when I replied, "No, no such luck," she remarked, "It probably had something to do with how 'nerdy'

you looked in that phase!” Then, upon reviewing an assortment of other photos of me during my high school years, Jennifer remarked, “Mom, you sure did change a lot from year to year. How is it possible to be so cool one year and nerdy the next?”

Adolescence is like that. So many changes, inside and out. Different looks, different feelings.

What Jennifer learned and wants you to understand is that much of what you see and how you feel during the teen years belongs to a “stage of development,” albeit an intense one. But keep in mind that all of us, at every age in our lives, are in a constant process of changing. Most of us may like our appearance a great deal one year, and the next only so-so. Or, we may be quite happy with the results of one stage, and wish we could skip other changes altogether!

Maybe right now you are going through a great phase – one in which you are healthy and happy and feeling good about yourself. Maybe your body feels energized rather than lazy from all the growing and hormonal changes going on. If so, great! But if you aren’t feeling

quite like Cinderella at the ball, remember that it's just that, a phase. Just ask your parents; they know from experience. I'll bet they have some photos of themselves much like those Jennifer discovered of me – photos that showed them in various stages of looking hot, and in Jennifer's words for me in tenth grade, "nerdy." We all change, especially in the teen years. As Jason, one of Jennifer's friends, said to me, "I look totally different than I did just three months ago because then I had a decent complexion, and now it's oily and zit-ridden. Then I had a great physique; now my body parts look like they don't belong with the other parts. Now, from one day to the next, my emotions are all over the place. Everything is changing! I'm looking forward to the time when the real me will stay around long enough for me to get used to!"

For Jason, it may be awhile. He just turned fifteen! But even though adolescence is a time of many changes – and some of them, like extra-oily skin you'd like to do without – there are some things you can do to feel good and look great while your body is moving from this stage to the next. This practical health, fitness and beauty guide

can help you look and feel attractive, inside and out, as you go through the tumultuous time of adolescence and help you answer questions that practically every teenager asks: What's with my ever-changing emotions and feelings? How can I understand them, much less cope? How can I look great all the time – even when I'm feeling so not “with it”? How can I feel self-confident and sure of myself when I'm not as attractive as others? How can I fit in, be one of the “cool” kids? What is the best way to care for my skin and hair, especially now that it's extra oily? How can I look great? What are the secrets of “cool”? What can I do to make the most of my looks, my body, my appearance?

These and a million other questions are asked by teens the world over. It's only natural to want to look and feel your best. There are practical benefits as well. Liking the way you look and feel can be a real edge in helping you be yourself around others. The more authentic you are – the more you stay true to the person you are – the less likely you will compromise yourself or your values to gain approval and acceptance from others. Having taught both junior and senior high

school – not to mention having a house full of teenagers when my daughter was an adolescent – I have a better appreciation for the ups and downs teens go through in this incredible time of growth, and especially for how tough it can be to go through this stage with other teens! As teens compare themselves to their peers, they often judge each other harshly and can be cruel in their remarks to each other. The more you like and accept yourself, the more confident you will be in keeping these comments in perspective; this can take the sting out of having your feelings hurt.

My daughter has blossomed out of her gangly phase and has become a lovely young woman. Like many of her classmates, she breezed through some phases, and grumbled and mumbled her way through others. Jennifer, now twenty-five, is a soulful person – one who sees people and life through the eyes of her heart. She has an eye for beauty, a nose for common sense and an extraordinarily large funny bone. She is a young woman who is comfortable in her own skin, and would love for you to be, too. Her advice in this book is simple: Value your health and do not sacrifice it. Believe in yourself

and make friends with the face in the mirror. Have the courage to be an individual; be aware of others around you; be friendly and courteous, but don't forget that you are you. Appreciate yourself; learn to enjoy the feeling of being healthy, fit and attractive on your terms. Be as healthy, fit and beautiful as you can be – but never lose sight of the fact that you get to decide what that means for you. Offer up your brand of beauty; you are who the world is waiting to see and learn all about.

If you will take this advice, you will reach the same happy conclusion as Jennifer: With each year there is a growing sense of self-confidence in your own style and in your own individual beauty. While we live in a world filled with others, we are each one-of-a-kind. Love that person, and we will, too.

– Bettie B. Youngs, Ph.D., Ed.D.

ABOUT THIS BOOK

Confidence and Self-Esteem for Teens is about the ways that beauty manifests from within. Have you ever run across someone who looked pretty, but undid her beauty by the way she acted or treated others? Compare that to someone who is thoughtful and has a kind heart, is confident and comfortable with herself and as a result, has a lovely presence about her. What is the difference between lovely and beautiful? The difference is inner harmony – and it's a huge part of true beauty.

This book shows you how to let your inner beauty shine through – things like the secrets of serenity, steps for staying cool under pressure, building your self-esteem, drawing security from loving others, setting goals and feeling purposeful – and more.

1

**If only I had known in high school
what I know now!**

Life is a challenge – Meet it!

Life is a song – Sing it!

Life is a dream – Realize it!

Life is a game – Play it!

Life is love – Enjoy it!

– Sri Sathya Sai Baba

Beauty begins on the inside

One of the things I liked best – and least – about being a teenager was the excitement of things being so “do or die!” For me, every little thing – every single word, action and even the thoughts of my family and friends (of course I always just knew what they were thinking) – was crucial, urgent and dire. For example, when I was in high school, if I wanted to go out with a certain guy, I hoped, planned and prayed that he would ask me out. I worried one minute that he wouldn’t ask and worried the next minute what I would do or say if and when he did. Then, when the guy did ask me out, I fretted that I somehow wouldn’t

measure up to his previous girlfriend – who I always pictured as drop-dead gorgeous, popular with everyone with whom she came into contact, brilliant and talented, and with a great body that was buffed to the max. Never mind that I didn't know her, nor had I ever even seen her. Never mind that I was a good athlete, was often on the honor roll and had many good friends. Somehow, I never really figured out that I could compete on my own merits. I worried about everything. Everything was such a big deal.

As agonizing as all this was, I didn't let it interfere with my being even more of a “drama-mama.” On the day of the big date, I would be simply devastated if my hair wasn't exactly perfect, if my complexion wasn't as clear as I hoped it would be; or if I didn't feel that I looked exactly as spectacular as I wanted. Then, even though my date and I had a nice time on that first date, I next worried about whether or not my heartthrob would ask me out again. When he did, I wondered if – and when – we would have date three, four, and five. You get the idea.

When the boyfriend became “my guy,” getting-a-

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guy anxiety gave way to keeping-my-guy anxiety. Now the task in my head was to make sure everyone knew Romeo and I were a “solid” couple, that our soulmate-love-made-in-heaven was forever, so they better “stay off my turf.”

Of course, the guy was probably going through a similar charade as well, one complete with its own doubts and insecurities. But I didn’t let that limit me from having fears of my own. The more the merrier!

So whether it was guys, grades, good friends or the way I looked and dressed, I put myself through the paces. Everything was “do or die.”

Brad Wilson: ‘to die for’

I’m older now, but even so, I still have my share of anxiety-ridden situations, only now things no longer seem so “do or die!” Experience has taught me to take things in stride and to trust myself more. And this trust makes all the difference in the world. For example, six months ago I met a great-looking guy (Brad Wilson) who asked me out for the following Saturday night. We agreed he’d pick me up at seven o’clock.

I was really looking forward to going out with Brad. On each of the several occasions I'd talked with him prior to his asking me out, I found him to be stylish, smart and savvy, funny, and as we would say in high school, "cool" and "to die for." So when the Saturday arrived, I bounded out of bed and headed for work in a better mood than usual (I work every other Saturday from 10:00 to 5:00). I was really looking forward to the evening. The day flew by!

Because I was off work at five o'clock, I knew I'd have ample time to run the two errands I needed to get done: picking up my hot new blazer and skirt from the cleaners so I could wear them on my date with Brad, and stopping at the city library to pick up a research book for an important college term paper due the following Monday. My brain had a time schedule all worked out: off at 5:00, to the cleaners by 5:15, at the library at 5:30, home by 6:00. Once at home, I'd do a quick twenty-minute pick-me-up workout with my favorite workout video to reenergize, then put on my favorite CD, take a relaxing bubble bath and have thirty minutes to dress for my big date!

If only I had known in high school what I know now!

Regardless of my being organized, things didn't go as planned! It fact, it took only ten minutes for things to begin to unravel! The employee who takes over when I leave at 5:00 called in sick. I found this out when the store manager phoned me and asked if I would please stay until he came in to cover for the sick employee. Of course, I said I would.

The manager said he would be at the store in twenty minutes – only he didn't arrive until 5:50!

Getting off work at 5:50 instead of 5:00 really cut into the time I'd planned for the leisurely and relaxed evening before my date arrived. Nevertheless, I left work the instant my manager arrived and headed straight for the cleaners, only to discover that the cleaners had already closed for the day. Although this was upsetting, I headed immediately to the library. I couldn't skip this errand because the city library is closed on Sundays, so I had no option but to go check out the book I needed for the paper I'd planned to do the next day. At least I thought I'd be checking out the book. When I got to the library, I found that the book hadn't been returned!

In short, not only were things not going as planned, but I was running very late. So late that I arrived home only minutes before my “to die for” date arrived!

Grace under pressure

If something similar had happened to me as a teenager, I would have been beside myself, working myself into a frenzy. Then I would have been in a bad mood, and who knows what kind of an evening I would have created. But now I’m learning to relax a bit, to take things in my stride, and to work with each situation – especially those that require grace under pressure. So when Brad knocked at the door, I opened it and said politely, “It’s wonderful to see you. I’m running about twenty minutes late. Come in and make yourself comfortable. If we need to reschedule dinner reservations, the phone is in the kitchen. I’ll tell you all about it over dinner!”

Then, twenty minutes later, Brad and I left my apartment and went to dinner. My hair was not having the best of days, and I was not wearing the hot new blazer and skirt that I had hoped to wear. Even so, I made the best of it and selected my next-favorite

If only I had known in high school what I know now!

outfit. As upsetting as it was that the research book I had planned on using for my term paper had not been returned to the library like it was supposed to have been, I decided I'd have to figure out a contingency plan the next day. I didn't have the benefit of reenergizing after a long day at work, or the benefit of relaxation time so as to switch gears from the "mental briefcase" of work-related problems. And the much-desired bubble bath where I had intended to dreamily anticipate the evening with Brad . . . well, that went down the drain (!) as well.

From 'ghoul' to 'cool'

I've learned that when things don't go as planned, when they aren't exactly the way you'd like them to be, you have to make the best of what you have. When you're stressed out or worrying about every little thing, it takes away from your "cool" – from looking and acting "together." With my new date, I simply had to get comfortable with the fact that I'd had a particularly hectic day and make the decision that I wasn't going to drag it along with me to dinner with Brad.

If only I had known in high school what I know now, I could have saved myself a lot of undue stress and looked a lot more cool to boot.

The secret of getting from A to B – from drama-mama to cool – is this: You can't always control the outer world, but you can control how you respond – how you act – in relation to what's going on around you. Unlike those things that you have little say or control over, such as the natural color of your eyes or an occasional bad hair day, the qualities that radiate your cool are under your control. Those qualities include a positive attitude and a decision to remain calm and focus on the solutions, rather than the problems at hand. Just as you put on an outfit that looks hot on you, or wear your hair in a style that compliments your face, or wear fingernail polish, lipstick or mascara to add color and pizzazz, you can greatly enhance the color of your cool. It's a choice you make to draw control from within. This choice becomes visible in a poised beauty that shines through you.

If only I had known in high school what I know now!

A secret of inner beauty: ‘act’ beautiful

You carry your beauty with you every minute of every day, every place you go. I’ll never forget the evening when a small group of us were returning from touring several of the old Southern plantations in Charleston, South Carolina, where we were attending Renaissance Weekend. A four-day event, Renaissance days began bright and early at seven o’clock. After the plantation tours, we went to dinner. After a ten-hour conference, then touring and dinner, I don’t mind telling you, I was dragging!

It was nearly 11:30 at night, and I was slouched in the small transport van in the seat beside eighty-year-old Patricia Hill Burnett. Exhausted and bleary-eyed, I gazed over at Patricia, sitting perfectly erect. Her chin up, she looked poised and lovely, every bit like a grand Southern belle. “Aren’t you tired?” I inquired, puzzled by her apparently endless energy and the fact that she could still look so composed, refreshed and beautiful after the day we’d had. “I’m exhausted,” I said, “and quite sure I look it. But you look so fresh and perky, as though you’ve napped. Have you?”

“Oh, no,” she replied, admitting, “It’s been quite a long day and I am most definitely tired.”

“But you look so radiant, so beautiful,” I remarked. “I’ve used up my allotment for the day. How do you do it?”

With her customary warmth and tenderness, Patricia reached for my hand, looked me in the eyes, and in her style of speaking while at the same time smiling, pointed to her head and said sweetly, “I keep a little reserve of beauty right up here.” Laughing softly, she added, “You are only as beautiful as you feel on the inside. Beauty is from the inside out. And, just as they say about sunshine, you have to carry it with you! To be beautiful, you must act beautiful.”

Patricia’s radiance comes not only from being beautiful, but also from acting beautiful. It’s one of the great secrets of beauty: Beauty comes from within.

It is primarily from this vantage point – beauty from the inside out – that we are beautiful.

If only I had known in high school what I know now!

Like money in the bank: the glow of inner beauty

Inner beauty has a powerful glow, one that is clearly visible to those around you. Perhaps you know someone like my friend, Patricia, whose inner beauty shines so brightly you describe her as “a beautiful person.” Unfortunately, some people are beautiful outside... and not so pretty inside. Perhaps you know someone who possesses great physical beauty but whose lack of inner vibrancy overshadows or even cancels out her outer beauty.

I’m reminded of a young man who wrote telling me he’d met a girl he thought was the “most beautiful girl he had ever seen.” Finally he got up the courage to ask her out. When she accepted, he thought he was the luckiest guy in the world. The feeling was short-lived. As he began to get to know her, he saw a person who was very different from what he had imagined. He discovered the girl wasn’t very kind and respectful of other people, qualities he associated with her not being happy within herself. After dating her for only five weeks, the young man decided not to ask the girl out anymore. “Seeing her beauty, I thought she must be beautiful,” he wrote, “but

as I got to see the real person, I could tell that her beauty was all on the outside, just an outward appearance. Even that wasn't lasting: When she didn't have her makeup on, she didn't think she was pretty and it showed in the way she treated others. I've learned that if a person doesn't feel pretty on the inside, then even though she is beautiful to look at, the advantage is shallow. When inner beauty is missing, your feelings of attraction for that person wear off. Being pretty on the outside can only get you so far."