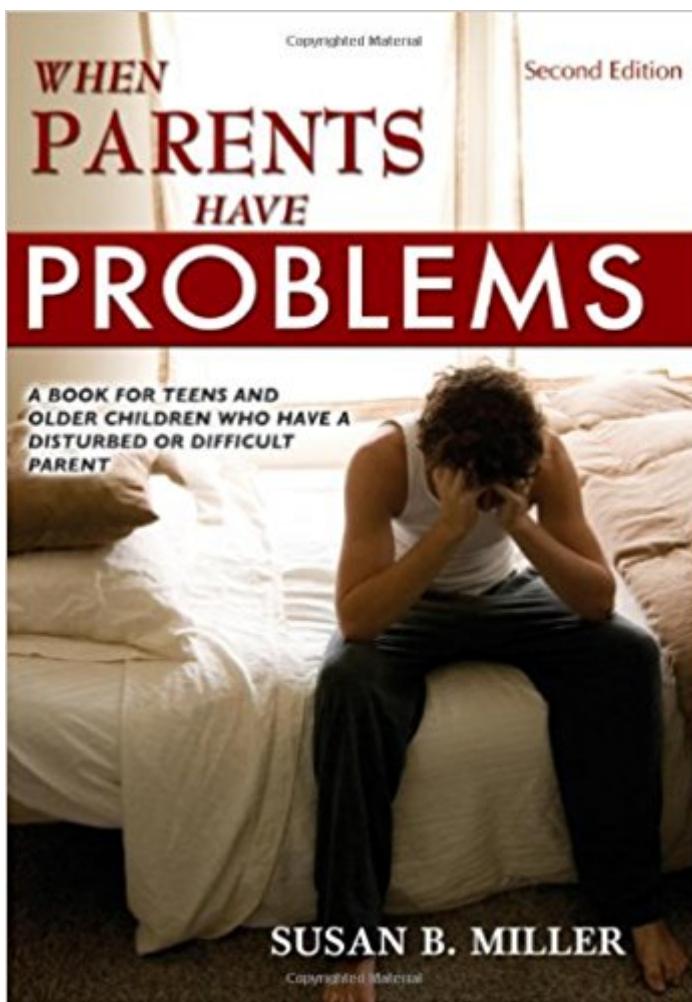


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# When Parents Have Problems: A Book For Teens And Older Children Who Have A Disturbed Or Difficult Parent



## **Synopsis**

Numerous books have been written for adults who grew up coping with troubled and difficult parents. This newly revised second edition expands the information in the previous edition by updating current knowledge that provides a thorough overview for children who are coping with difficult and/or troubled parents. Two chapters have been added. The first addresses parents who have difficult personalities. These parents are not openly abusive or obviously neglectful to their kids but are overprotective, perfectionists, and immature. The kinds of problems that a parent's troubles can cause and ideas on how to deal constructively with the challenges is discussed. The second new chapter addresses parents in poverty. Some families are poor by any standard, and some are poor in relation to their community. Either type of poverty is difficult for a child, and the problems of poverty may be different for a teenager than for a younger child. The author helps the reader to be realistic about the sources of a problem, particularly if they are the result of a parent's difficulties. Additional topics discuss mistreatment, selfishness, when parents are in pain, when parents cause pain, powerhouse feelings, troubled parents and ordinary teen life. scapegoating, power struggles, choosing your parent over yourself, why parents have problems, and when should you call Protective Services. Suggestions are incorporated throughout the book on how to deal with the problems of the parent so that the child and/or teenager can keep on track with their own growing up. This book is an excellent resource for therapists, school counselors, group leaders, and others who work with children and teenagers and who want reading materials to recommend to them.

## **Book Information**

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## **Customer Reviews**

Susan Miller has written a kind and much needed book for young people living with a parent who has problems ranging from poverty, to personality disorders, to being abusive or neglectful. We have known since Winnicott how important it is for children to have good enough parenting, and Miller explains to young people the ways in which parents may not be good enough, and how difficult it is to grow up under these circumstances. She provides insights, case examples, and advice, with impeccable psychological understanding of the issues young people face. Miller tells us she wrote the book to address the needs of people who had told her (if only I had known as a child how to cope with my troubled parents.) A book can reach a much wider audience of young people than one therapist can hope to see in a lifetime of practice. I was left, however, with several concerns. How will Miller reach her target audience, unless they have been led to her book by a counselor or therapist? When Parents Have Problems covers every type of problem a parent could have, and each chapter is full of different, occasionally contradictory examples. If I were a young person with a troubled parent would I find enough specific guidance about my own situation to keep reading? Miller simplifies her language so that the book will be accessible to children ten and older, but her therapeutic insights and conclusions may be over the heads of most children. She provides informative chapters at the end of the book describing how to seek help, and how therapy works, but would a child be sophisticated enough to find information in a later chapter? With these caveats, I can recommend the book, especially for teenagers and young adults. --Jeanne Bereiter, MD

This book helps older children and teens understand people better and distinguish in their own minds what is OK and what is not. I wish it had more information on how children can set boundaries with unhealthy adults, though.

If only this book had been written 30 years ago...bought this for teenage step-children, due to the very high conflict personality and alcohol abuses of their mother. They read one chapter before she confiscated it, yet tells them "they have social awkwardness problems" and forces them to attend counseling. I know the counselor isn't hearing this side of the story of the brow beatings and brainwashing from their mom. It's no wonder mom confiscated the book, they may gain some real insight. They understandably love their mom, they just don't know how to deal with her and blame themselves. We bought them another copy and encourage them to learn for themselves how to deal with difficult people, as they will encounter them all of their lives. Update: The kids read the new copy of the book and have a much better understanding of the situation they are in, which helps them with coping skills.

I read this book and then offered it to the parent of a client of mine. She confirmed my doubts. The authors have good intentions, but they have tried to cover too many bases. We decided not to give the book to her tweener son because it might confuse him. We'll continue our search for something more focused on the specific problems he is dealing with.

A good effort to describe the ways parental problems cause kids difficulties. In trying to target all kinds of situations, a teen might read about substance abuse or other problems their parent does not have. Best read with an adult coach.

As a school advisor, I have recommended this fine book to students and to other professionals. It is easy to read and understand and does an excellent job with a difficult topic that teens are often unwilling to discuss. It is a fine resource for adolescents who are struggling with difficult family situations.

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