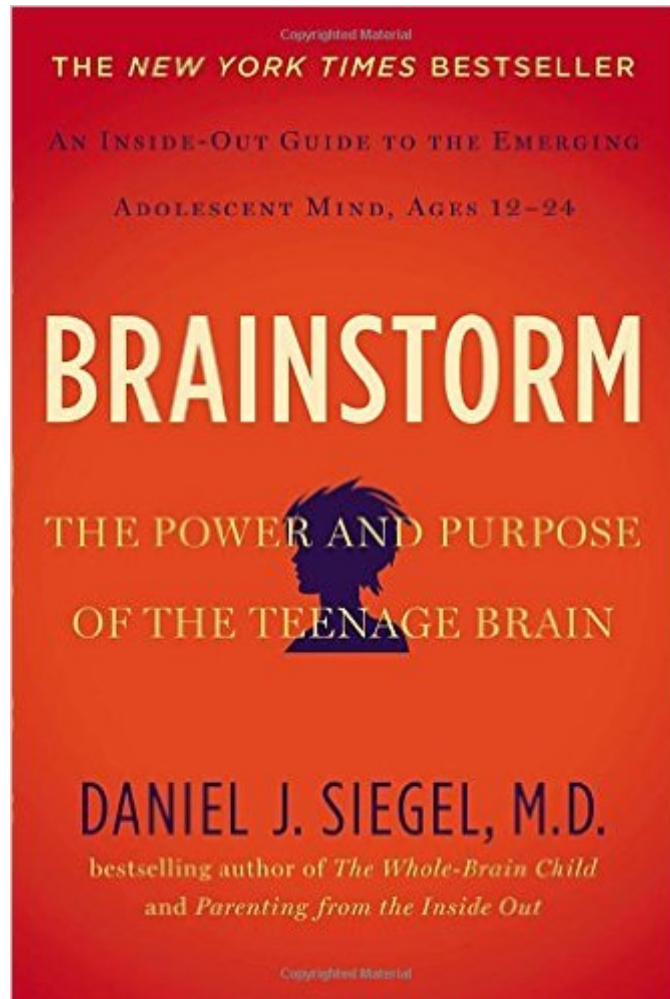


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Brainstorm: The Power And Purpose Of The Teenage Brain



Synopsis

In this New York Times "bestselling book, Dr. Daniel Siegel shows parents how to turn one of the most challenging developmental periods in their children's lives into one of the most rewarding. Between the ages of twelve and twenty-four, the brain changes in important and, at times, challenging ways. In *Brainstorm*, Dr. Daniel Siegel busts a number of commonly held myths about adolescence—for example, that it is merely a stage of immaturity filled with often crazy behavior. According to Siegel, during adolescence we learn vital skills, such as how to leave home and enter the larger world, connect deeply with others, and safely experiment and take risks. Drawing on important new research in the field of interpersonal neurobiology, Siegel explores exciting ways in which understanding how the brain functions can improve the lives of adolescents, making their relationships more fulfilling and less lonely and distressing on both sides of the generational divide.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

I read with alacrity "Brain Based Parenting: the neuroscience of caregiving for healthy attachment", on which Daniel J. Siegel was the third author, and gave that book 5 stars in an .com review. So I started out with high expectations for Siegel's more recent work, *Brainstorm*. Really, I did.

Unfortunately the weaknesses of the book far outweighed its strengths, for me anyway, as I'll outline below. There are multiple other books on raising and understanding teenagers I'd recommend before this one, as I'll list at the end. Strengths: (1) It's always good to remind oneself of the positive

aspects of the developmental phase of the adolescent. Siegel lists these strengths as: intense and spontaneous emotions, intense and powerful peer and social connections, a spark of uniqueness and originality, and a profound search for one's identity and place in the universe. Frustrated parents can easily fall into the trap of seeing only your teenager's faults and negative behaviors. Remembering to see the upside (which is really only discussed in the first chapter of the book) is a good thing. (2) Somehow Siegel wanders into the topic of healing your brain from trauma. During the course of this digression, he reviews an intriguing theory of psychological trauma (p. 176ff) that painful memories that are 'locked up' in the right hemisphere - the seat of emotion, imagery, and "implicit" (timeless and voiceless) memories - cause intense pain, fear, and flashbacks. When the right and left (verbal, analytic, logical and chronological) brain are integrated, the left side of the brain can give a coherent narrative to the trauma story and place it into a past perspective.

Firstly and as usual, I received this book for the ripe sum of nothing via a giveaway, this time from Shelf Awareness. Despite that kind consideration from all involved my candid opinions follow below. To extend the preamble a bit, this book wasn't quite what I expected. Because of that I'm going to keep the value judgments to a minimum and instead just try to describe what the book tries to be. It's up to you whether it's what you want to be reading or not. I just make with the descriptions. What I expected out of this book was something rather harder and more specific about the science. The book jacket says it's based on the latest research and I have no doubt that's the case but none of that research seems to have made its way directly into the book. Instead what you have is very soft and results-based approach to the topic. So if you're expecting data on brain chemistry changes through the adolescent years then, like me, you'll likely be disappointed. Instead you'll get instruction through analogy with concepts like "Mindsight" and the "Wheel of Awareness". This all seemed a bit soft to me but I suspect that for the majority of the population this sort of 'softness' is actually a ringing endorsement. Siegel has made a decidedly complex topic easily readable and provides parents with the tools they need to deal with a historically difficult period of parenthood. Even more usefully, the doctor doesn't just dole out information but provides mental exercises the reader can perform to help internalize the lesson being taught and make it easier to implement personal changes. His text is also filled with abundant anecdotes from his own practice to reinforce the idea that the situations parents face are far from unique and have been dealt with successfully in the past.

Daniel J. Siegel M.D. delivers a helpful guide for parents, teachers, mentors, and caregivers on the

journey of adolescence. The author discusses the age of 12-24, a challenging time for the adolescent and the caregiver, which can also be a painful, thrilling time. Tips are given of how to help the adolescent survive and thrive, through this period in life. In addition, Doctor Siegel presents myths that are not true, such as raging hormones to be the evil cause, or to lose their minds. He explains that hormones do increase, but they don't determine what goes on. The author highlights that what goes on, what they experience, is the result of changes in the development of the brain. To know about these changes, is the golden key to helping an adolescent. This knowledge can help the parent, teacher, and mentor to make things more smoothing. Another myth is that adolescence is a time of immaturity, and they need to 'grow up.' The truth is that an adolescent travels through a path that can be confusing, and intense. Doctor Siegel also presents information on the testing of boundaries, the passion to explore the unknown, and the exciting. The findings of research and the truths of understanding this stage of life, can help the adolescent to lead an adventure, and purpose. The author also discusses dependence versus independence. More important, he points out that if we get beyond the myths, we can make this journey much better for the adolescent, and the caregiver. In conclusion, if we project negative attitudes, then this is how they see themselves. They will sink to that level, instead of realizing their true potential. We need to understand that this is a time of emotional intensity, social engagement, and creativity.

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