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Calling for a Sex Ed U-Turn

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Miriam Grossman, *You're Teaching My Child What? A Physician Exposes the Lies of Sex Ed and How They Harm Your Child* (Washington, DC: Regnery Publishing, 2009).

Although written more than five years ago, Dr. Miriam Grossman's *You're Teaching My Child What?* is as relevant today as it was on the day of its release. Chapter one of the book sends this ominous warning to parents: "Parents beware: the people teaching your child are activists, promoting radical agendas at odds with your values" (15). It was true in 2009; it is even more true in 2015. Case in point: a July 2015 CDC report informed America that more teens are waiting for sex. In fact, teen sex has decreased 14% for girls and 22% for boys over the past 25 years. Great news, particularly when one considers the increasingly sexualized culture in which they are growing up. One would expect a corporate affirmation for this good news! But such was not the case among the pro-teen-sex ideologues that Dr. Grossman so accurately describes in her book. Instead, the **principal research scientist at the Guttmacher Institute**, a research arm for the pro-sex lobby said this in reaction to the news: "It's normal for teenagers by the time they enter young adulthood to be having sex, so I don't want to problematize that." Most teens are not having sex, yet this researcher is unable to choke out a "well done" to these young people. Instead, she insists that teen sex is not a problem. Out of touch with what most parents want for their children? Yes, indeed. A 2012 national survey reiterated that most parents want their children to wait until marriage before engaging in sex. And the percentages didn't waver much when broken down by political leaning, ethnicity or geographic locale. Parents want what is best for their children. But a host of ideologues disguising themselves as educators, reproductive researchers, and concerned activists have a different view. And they are the ones who are driving sex education policy in many communities.

Grossman accurately describes them in her book: "And they believe they know better than you do what's best for your kids, so you should trust them, the 'experts,' and ignore your gut feelings. Wake up, America: this is one giant hoax. I know these groups, their values and curricula. They are steeped in ideology, permeated with extremism. Non-judgmental? Sure, until they're challenged with scientific facts. Point to the science that discredits their beliefs, and well, you know the names you'll be called" (11). But Grossman's purpose in writing the book is not to change the minds of these ideologues. That would be a hopeless task. Her goal is to warn and inform parents of the nefarious agenda for the hearts, minds, and health of their children—and to equip them to defend their children's futures in school board meetings and public gatherings across the country.

The book exposes and discredits the common set of closely held beliefs among the pro-teen-sex lobby. She devotes a chapter to each of the larger topics. Don't expect difficult-to-read academic prose in this book, however. Dr. Grossman summarizes research in an easy-to-read format that is effortlessly

consumed and easily repeated. And there are pages and pages of citations for the reader who wants the academic research details of each study. This book is an essential resource for parents who are concerned about the sex education being thrust upon their children, but it is also important for parents who don't currently have such concerns.

Grossman unpacks some of the topics presently being debated on the front pages of newspapers across the country. She often draws upon personal experiences she has had with students at the university level to contextualize research on a given topic. Her pithy retorts and reasoned responses add tremendously to our understanding and ability to communicate with confidence on often-difficult themes. She doesn't shy away from controversy and admonishes parents to follow suit. When groups like SIECUS or Advocates for Youth spout head-scratching "facts" about teens and sexuality, she validates parents' reluctance to take the extremist bait. She debunks these mainstays of the pro-teen-sex lobby:

- Male and female differences are artificial constructs of a repressive society.
- Healthy teens should explore and experiment with their sexuality as a matter of course in their adolescent development.
- Sex is disconnected from the holistic nature of a person and casual sex can be enjoyed without strings, attachment, or negative consequences.
- Gender identity, transgenderism and gender questioning are required components of school sex education curricula.

Dr. Grossman concludes the book with practical tips for parents in communicating the beauty of sex to their children while also emphasizing the healthiest context for sex. But she also equips parents to become activists for their children and issues a call to arms in the concluding chapter: "Don't allow [these harmful philosophies] to go unchallenged, permitting the sex crusaders to commandeer your authority...Grab the wheel, Mom and Dad. It's time for a U-turn" (183). This book helps parents take that wheel so they can steer their children and our society to safer and healthier roads ahead.

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