



Young Adults Sharing Reading Choices

Survey Results

In this chapter, I will discuss the responses to Questions 3 and 4 of the survey.

Question 3: Have you ever read a book or some type of writing that helped you with the issues that challenge you? Name that book(s) or work(s).

Of all the survey questions, Question 3 is the one of greatest interest to English teachers and librarians, and it is most central to the purpose of this book. When viewing the tables below, it might be easy on first read to despair about the number of respondents who indicate “none” regarding a book that might have helped them with the issues in their lives. Possibly respondents felt they could list a book only if it directly helped them with one of the issues they cited in response to Question 1. I am aware of responses that said, “I have never read a book that helped me with these issues.” At the same time, the number of respondents who listed the Bible or various books in the Chicken Soup series indicates that some respondents might have interpreted the question about issues in their lives more literally than I intended. Nonetheless, I see the high number of “none” responses and the number of Chicken Soup and Bible responses as a signal that young adults can use some help from teachers and librarians about connecting reading more closely to their lives and experiences. This connection can include the literature and other books they read as part of coursework or in school-related contexts as well as the reading they do on their own.

Some might wonder why I include in my lists a title that is suggested by only one teen. First of all, many titles listed by a single respondent in an age group—13-year-olds, for example—are listed in other age groups. Also in the interest of allowing the voices of the teen participants to be “heard,” I wanted to be sure all titles or categories named by the teens would show up.

Here again books are categorized, as shown in table 2.1, and the number following each descriptor is the overall number from the possible 1416 respondents on what they had read that helped them. Looking at the books/readings that helped teens according to gender reveals some interesting insights, as shown in figures 2.1 and 2.2.

One obvious conclusion from figures 2.1 and 2.2 is that females have read more than males. This is not an unusual insight; most teachers are well aware of this situation in their classrooms. The fact remains, though: adolescent males have many challenging issues in their lives. Thus the task for teachers, librarians, and parents is to direct males to books that will engage and help them. Also, the high-profile school violence cases of recent years more often involve males than females. Some of what has been learned from the male offenders relates to loss of meaning or inability to feel accepted, and a major premise of this book is that adolescents can find meaning in stories and in the broad spectrum of YA literature. Chapters 4 through 8 list many books with appeal to male readers, as the annotations make clear; there are also specific book lists included at the end of the chapter directed primarily to adolescent males.

The actual titles are of greatest interest though, and these are shown in tables 2.2 through table 2.12 in alphabetical order by title. There may be

Table 2.1. Books That Helped Teens (1401 Responses)

Categories of Books	Responses	Percent
None	722	51.5%
Chicken Soup series	143	10%
Bible	124	9%
Self-help	100	7%
YA titles	116	8%
“Classics”	46	3.3%
Magazines, movies, music, newspaper, the Internet	76	5%
Poetry	6	0.4%
Contemporary bestsellers	33	2.3%
Couldn’t remember the title	35	2.5%
Totals	1401	100%

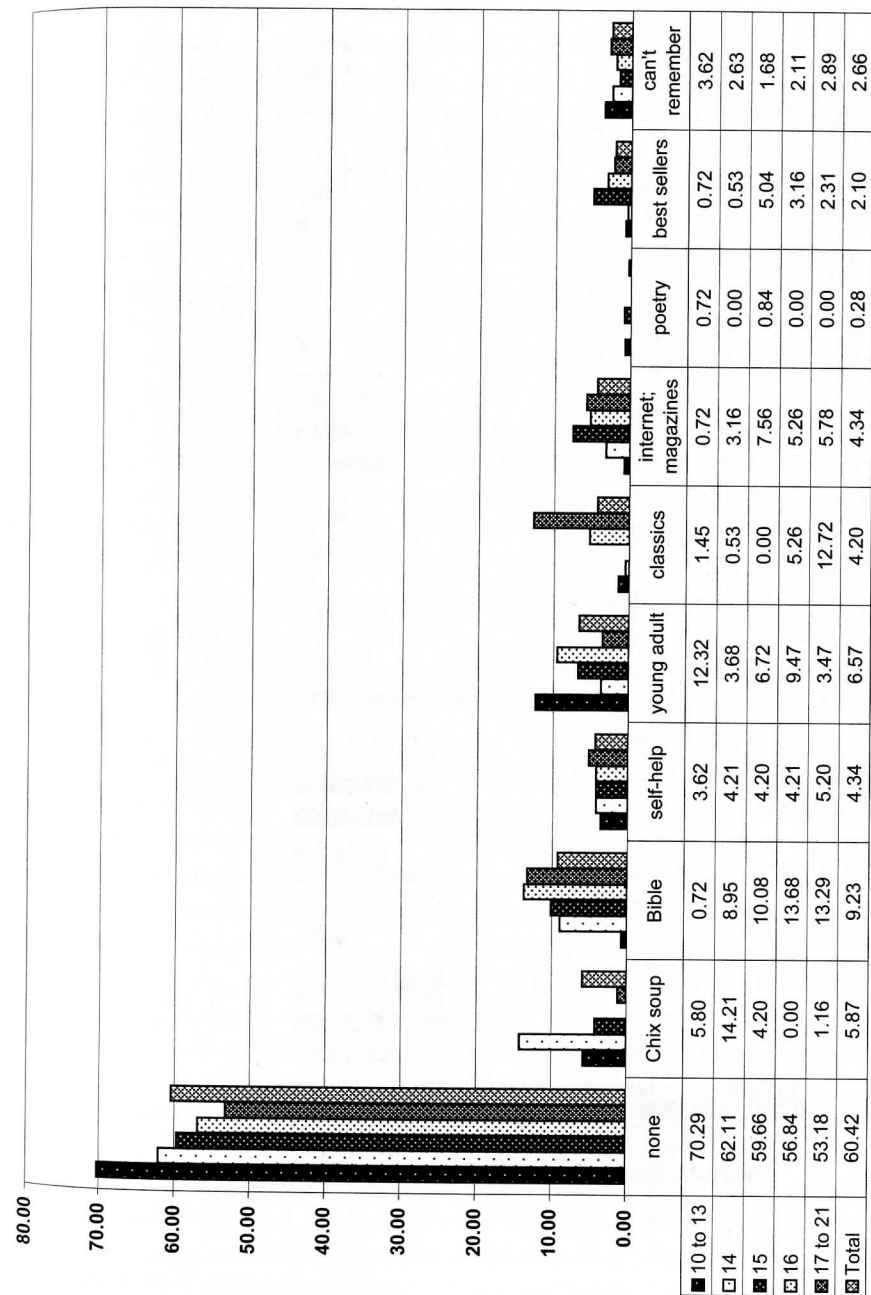


Figure 2.1. Books That Helped Males (% of 726)

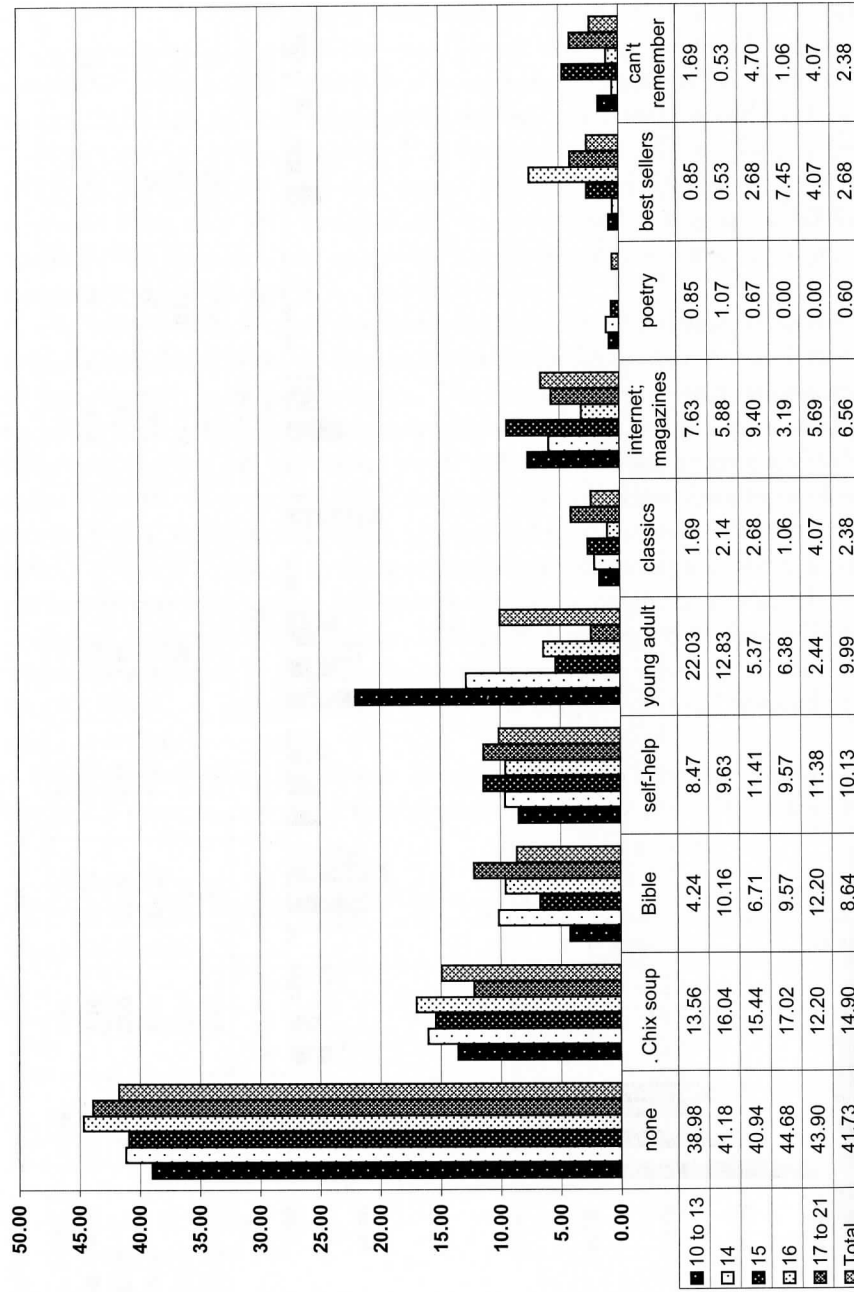


Figure 2.2. Books That Helped Females (% of 680)

some errors in titles; I have recorded exactly what respondents listed unless I could identify an obvious spelling error or incorrect wording in a title. Also, because those 12 and under had listed a significant number of books, I have included these in separate tables. For every age group, there are books to which parents of respondents of a particular age might object. Again, I have accurately recorded the information respondents provided. An authentic part of “listening to the adolescents” requires that we—teachers, parents, librarians, and other concerned adults—respect what the teens list. Often while teens won’t reveal in any public forum an issue of concern in their lives, they will seek out other sources of information. Most of the books listed are among the safest ways of finding information and meaning. Most often when respondents have cited music, they are referring to the lyrics of songs that they’ve found helpful.

A number of titles listed throughout the age groups are “classics” or obviously literature that the teens have read in school. I find this a positive factor; if teens *are* finding meaning and making connections from the literature read for coursework, teachers will know they’ve achieved a major objective. And if the title of a “classic” work was all the respondent could remember, that still is a positive factor—at least the literature made enough of an impact to be remembered.

The number of references to the books in the Chicken Soup series rises from 12-year-olds (see table 2.2) through 16-year-olds, but then drops and few of the respondents in the 18–21-year-old category list these. It is also evident that the books these older teens suggest differ from those suggested by younger teens. Those 18 and older, for example, do not cite books in the Harry Potter and Lord of the Rings series. Generally, from age 17 on, respondents cite more books related to American and British literature and philosophy; these books align with coursework and may be an indication of these teens having less time for reading outside of school requirements.

In addition to the books cited by those 12 years old and younger, two participants listed magazines. There are a couple of notable differences between those 12 and under and the 13-year-old respondents. Twelve-year-olds are the only group where the Bible is listed only once. The surprising response from 12-year-olds, as noted by a participant at a workshop where I was recently sharing this data, is that one person listed *The Godfather*. I have no particular answer for why younger adolescents would name a book like *The Godfather* except to note that the books listed indicate that teens both read “up”—read what some adults might think are too difficult for a particular age level—as well as “down”—teens return to something they read when

Table 2.2. Books That Helped 12-Year-Olds (75 Responses)

Books	Responses
None	33
Chicken Soup books	9
Harry Potter books	2
Monster	2
<i>Roll of Thunder, Hear My Cry</i>	2
<i>A Walk to Remember</i>	2
<i>All American Girl</i>	1
<i>Angus, Thongs, and Full-Frontal Snogging</i>	1
<i>Are You There God? It's Me Margaret</i>	1
Bible	1
Cages	1
DARE pamphlet	1
<i>Divine Secrets of the Ya-Ya Sisterhood</i>	1
<i>Girl Gets Real: A Teenage Guide to Life</i>	1
<i>The Girls</i>	1
<i>Go Ask Alice</i>	1
<i>Hoops</i>	1
<i>Keeping the Moon</i>	1
<i>Left Behind</i>	1
<i>Let the Circle Be Unbroken</i>	1
<i>Lizzy at Last</i>	1
<i>Mandy</i>	1
<i>Missing Since Monday</i>	1
Nancy Drew books	1
<i>Popular</i>	1
<i>Sisterhood of the Traveling Pants</i>	1
<i>Speak</i>	1
<i>Stormbreaker</i>	1
<i>Strategies for Teens</i>	1
<i>Summer of My German Soldier</i>	1

younger, no doubt because they see this book from a new sense of maturity. Some examples of the "reading down" category include *The Little Engine that Could* and *Scrawny the Duck*, which appear on the list for 13-year-olds. But even more, the Harry Potter books or *The Hobbit* or *A Wrinkle in Time* appear on lists of those from 13 and up (table 2.3).

The additional categories that 13-year-olds gave included *Teen* magazine, music, Garfield comics, and the TV program *Seventh Heaven*. With the 13-year-olds, we find the first reference to *A Child Called It* or to other of the David Peltzer books. It is interesting that these titles are cited by every group,

Table 2.3. Books That Helped 13-Year-Olds (172 Responses)

Books	Responses
None	115
Chicken Soup books	18
Bible	5
<i>Holes</i>	4
Alice series	2
<i>Are You There God? It's Me Margaret</i>	2
Books by Gary Paulsen	2
<i>The Diary of Anne Frank</i>	2
<i>Go Ask Alice</i>	2
<i>Hoop Dreams</i>	2
Poems by Emily Dickinson	2
<i>A Ring of Endless Light</i>	2
<i>Slam</i>	2
<i>Artemis Fowl</i>	1
Biography of Martin Luther King Jr.	1
Biography of Michael Jordan	1
<i>A Child Called It</i>	1
<i>Child of the Wolves</i>	1
<i>Coming Clean</i>	1
<i>Divine Secrets of the Ya-Ya Sisterhood</i>	1
<i>Don't Sweat the Small Stuff for Teenagers</i>	1
<i>Far Apart, Yet So Close</i>	1
Georgia series	1
<i>Girl's Guide to Growing Up</i>	1
<i>Girl's Guide to Life</i>	1
<i>The Godfather</i>	1
<i>God's Little Book of Devotionals</i>	1
Harry Potter books	1
<i>Hoops</i>	1
<i>I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings</i>	1
<i>Just Ella</i>	1
<i>The Little Engine That Could</i>	1
<i>Make Lemonade</i>	1
<i>Midnight for Charlie Bone</i>	1
My America series	1
<i>Of Mice and Men</i>	1
<i>Phoenix Rising</i>	1
Phyllis Naylor books	1
Poems such as "Making Sara Cry"	1
<i>Pony Pals</i>	1
<i>River Boy</i>	1
<i>Scrawny, the Classroom Duck</i>	1
<i>The Seven Habits of Highly Successful Teens</i>	1
<i>She Said Yes</i>	1

even those 18 and older. Peltzer's story is horrific, but because the teens themselves have named his books and, once again, teachers who have seen this data verify how many of their students read Peltzer's books, I believe we have to take the listing of these titles seriously.

Beginning with the 14-year-olds (see tables 2.4 and 2.5), more books that might be considered "classics" or at least part of the typical high school English curriculum begin to show up. Works such as *Of Mice and Men*, *To Kill a Mockingbird*, *Night*, and *Cyrano de Bergerac*, for example, appear fairly consistently from the 14-year-old selections up. If respondents actually found what they were reading "officially" in English classes connected to their lives, this is a very positive factor. Also evident in the lists for those 14- through 17-years old are an increasing number in "the self-help" category (see tables 2.6 through 2.11).

Two other categories that 18- to 21-year-olds indicated are music—specifically the lyrics of songs—and journaling. The books chosen by those 18 and older (see table 2.12) do not hold many surprises; teachers who have seen the results seem to agree that the responses are typical even when they are from regions of the country where I probably did not have survey participants. When I shared these survey responses with teachers at a California English teachers' conference, their responses showed much commonality between selections appearing on the survey and what selections they thought their students might have indicated.

Survey Question 4 shifts focus from what teens read to what they would recommend to their peers:

Question 4: What are some books or other writings that you'd recommend to your peers to read for finding advice or guidance?

Table 2.13 gives the overall totals by category of the books that teens would recommend. The percentage of respondents having no recommendations is 7 percent lower than those saying "None" in response to Question 3 about having read a book that helped them. In addition, the percentages of respondents who would recommend the Bible or books in the Chicken Soup series are slightly higher than the percentages who say these books have helped them. More respondents recommend books in the self-help and YA literature categories than say they have been helped by books in these two categories. The rest of the percentages are nearly the same for both books read and books recommended. Figures 2.3 and 2.4 present a composite of data, by gender and age groups, on the books recommended.

Table 2.4. Books That Helped 14-Year-Olds (377 Responses)

<i>Books</i>	<i>Responses</i>
None	186
Chicken Soup books	57
Bible	38
<i>A Child Called It</i>	6
Books by Lurlene McDaniel	3
<i>Daily Devotionals</i>	3
Harry Potter books	3
Lord of the Rings trilogy	3
<i>Seven Habits of Highly Effective People</i>	3
<i>She Said Yes</i>	3
<i>To Kill a Mockingbird</i>	3
<i>A Walk to Remember</i>	3
Alice series	2
<i>Be An Eleven</i>	2
<i>Catcher in the Rye</i>	2
<i>Ender's Game</i>	2
<i>Hard Love</i>	2
<i>The Lost Boy</i>	2
<i>A Man Called Dave</i>	2
<i>Mick Harte Was Here</i>	2
<i>The Outsiders</i>	2
<i>Speak</i>	2
<i>A Tree Grows in Brooklyn</i>	2
<i>The Blue Day Book</i>	1
<i>The Contender</i>	1
<i>The Diary of Anne Frank</i>	1
<i>The Disappearance</i>	1
<i>Dr. Humor</i>	1
<i>The Face on the Milk Carton</i>	1
<i>Fatality</i>	1
<i>Girl's Life</i>	1
<i>Girls Speak Out</i>	1
<i>The Giver</i>	1
<i>The Godfather</i>	1
Heartland series	1
<i>Holes</i>	1
<i>Homecoming</i>	1
<i>Hush Little Baby</i>	1
<i>I Am Morgan Le Fey</i>	1
<i>If God Loves Me, Why Can't I Open My Locker?</i>	1
<i>Jacob Have I Loved</i>	1
<i>Life in the Fat Lane</i>	1

(continues)

Table 2.4. Continued

<i>Books</i>	<i>Responses</i>
<i>Life Strategies for Teens</i>	1
<i>Maggie Cassidy</i>	1
<i>Please Understand Me</i>	1
<i>The Poisonwood Bible</i>	1
<i>The Prayer of Jabez</i>	1
<i>Reviving Ophelia</i>	1
<i>Run for Your Life</i>	1
<i>A Runner's World</i>	1
<i>Safe Sex</i>	1
<i>Savage Nation</i>	1
<i>The Scarlet Letter</i>	1
<i>Shabanu</i>	1
<i>Sisterhood of the Traveling Pants</i>	1
<i>A Squire's Tale</i>	1
<i>Tiger Eyes</i>	1
<i>Where the Red Fern Grows</i>	1

Table 2.5. Other Interests That Helped 14-Year-Olds

<i>Interests</i>	<i>Responses</i>
The Internet	17
Poetry	3
Movies	2
Magazines	1
College catalogues	1
Music	1

Males in all age groups recommended more books than they indicated having found helpful themselves; specifically they recommended both the Bible and books in the Chicken Soup series more often than they say they were helped by those books. It is significant that teen males have more books they'd recommend than they list as having read (or at least, that they say they were helped by) themselves. While the percentages are not much higher, it still is encouraging that they are higher. Males consistently recommended more books in the self-help category; except for 15-year-olds, the percentage in all other age groups doubles in the recommendations of self-help books. Fifteen-year-old males recommended more YA literature and classics than any other group.

Table 2.6. Books That Helped 15-Year-Olds (269 Responses)

<i>Books</i>	<i>Responses</i>
None	127
Chicken Soup books	27
Bible	23
Books from English classes	2
Caroline Cooney books	2
<i>Cleopatra, Queen of Egypt</i>	2
<i>Don't Sweat the Small Stuff for Teens</i>	2
Harry Potter books	2
<i>The Outsiders</i>	2
<i>Speak</i>	2
<i>Atlas Shrugged</i>	1
<i>The Bean Trees</i>	1
<i>The Best Don't Rest</i>	1
Biographies	1
<i>The Blue Day Book</i>	1
Books by Harwell K. Hamilton	1
<i>Cat's Cradle</i>	1
<i>Chocolate for the Woman's Soul</i>	1
<i>Dear Abby</i>	1
<i>A Diary of a Teenage Girl</i>	1
<i>Eastbay</i>	1
<i>Fallen Angels</i>	1
<i>Forrest Gump</i>	1
<i>Freak the Mighty</i>	1
<i>Girl, Interrupted</i>	1
<i>He Chose the Nails</i>	1
<i>How to Be Cool in Third Grade</i>	1
<i>Kama Sutra</i>	1
<i>Let's Roll</i>	1
<i>Like Sisters on the Homefront</i>	1
Lord of the Rings trilogy	1
<i>Lyddie</i>	1
<i>Men Are from Mars, Women Are from Venus</i>	1
<i>My Name Is Davy</i>	1
<i>The Next Place</i>	1
<i>Night</i>	1
<i>The Perks of Being a Wallflower</i>	1
<i>The Pigman</i>	1
Poems by Emily Dickinson	1
<i>Pretense</i>	1
<i>The Princess Diaries</i>	1
<i>The Prophet</i>	1

(continues)

Table 2.6. Continued

Books	Responses
<i>Rachel's Tears</i>	1
<i>A Rooster Crows</i>	1
<i>See You at the Top</i>	1
<i>Shabanu</i>	1
<i>Skullcrack</i>	1
<i>Soccer Duel</i>	1
<i>Staying Fat for Sarah Byrnes</i>	1
<i>Story of Cassie Bernall</i>	1
<i>Ten Habits of Highly Effective Teens</i>	1
<i>That Was Then, This Is Now</i>	1
<i>Time to Let Go</i>	1
<i>Understanding Your Potential</i>	1
<i>A Walk in the Woods</i>	1
<i>Whale Talk</i>	1
<i>When the Last Leaf Falls</i>	1
<i>Where the Red Fern Grows</i>	1
<i>Winnie the Pooh</i>	1

Table 2.7. Other Interests That Helped 15-Year-Olds

Interests	Responses
Magazines	14
Music	8
The Internet	2
Movies	2
Newspapers	1
Pamphlets from counselors	1
Poetry	1

Females also consistently recommended more books that they indicated having been helped by reading, including the Bible and the Chicken Soup books. Several age groups among females show a rise in recommendation of self-help books, though this observation fits human nature in general— we more easily recommend help to others than identify what we ourselves might need. In one age group, 17–21, the percentage of recommended YA literature doubles from what females said they'd read. That is an interesting distinction and one that fits with a purpose of this book overall—to help teens become more aware of the powerful resource in YA literature.

Table 2.8. Books That Helped 16-Year-Olds (190 Responses)

Books	Responses
None	96
Bible	24
Chicken Soup books	17
<i>To Kill a Mockingbird</i>	3
<i>A Child Called It</i>	2
<i>Don't Sweat the Small Stuff</i>	2
<i>Jim the Boy</i>	2
<i>The Mists of Avalon</i>	2
<i>The Anarchist Cookbook</i>	1
<i>Angels Watching over Me</i>	1
<i>Athletic Shorts</i>	1
<i>Atlas Shrugged</i>	1
Books by V. C. Andrews	1
Books by Beverly Cleary	1
Books and essays by Nietzsche	1
Books by Ayn Rand	1
<i>Charlotte Doyle</i>	1
Child of Prophecy series	1
<i>The Corrections</i>	1
<i>Dangerous Angels</i>	1
<i>The Divine Secrets of the Ya-Ya Sisterhood</i>	1
<i>Dune</i>	1
<i>Ella Enchanted</i>	1
<i>E-mail from God for Teens</i>	1
<i>Ender's Game</i>	1
<i>Girl Interrupted</i>	1
<i>The Giver</i>	1
<i>Got Issues Man</i>	1
<i>The Hanged Man</i>	1
Harry Potter books	1
<i>Hatchet</i>	1
<i>Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy</i>	1
<i>Holes</i>	1
<i>Howl</i>	1
<i>Icy Sparks</i>	1
<i>I Kissed Dating Goodbye</i>	1
<i>I Was a Teenage Fairy</i>	1
<i>Invisible Monster</i>	1
<i>Ironman</i>	1
<i>James and the Giant Peach</i>	1
<i>Japanese Manga</i>	1
<i>Juventud en extsis</i>	1

(continues)

Table 2.8. Continued

<i>Books</i>	<i>Responses</i>
<i>Leaves of Grass</i>	1
Left Behind series	1
Lord of the Rings trilogy	1
Max Lucado books	1
<i>Mustard</i>	1
<i>On the Road</i>	1
<i>One Day in the Life of Ivan Denisovitch</i>	1
<i>The Perks of Being a Wallflower</i>	1
<i>The Plague Tales</i>	1
<i>Prozac Nation</i>	1
<i>Rachel's Tears</i>	1
<i>Rainshadow</i>	1
<i>Siddhartha</i>	1
<i>Silent Honor</i>	1
<i>Soldier's Heart</i>	1
<i>Street Lawyer</i>	1
<i>Till Death Brings Us Apart</i>	1
<i>Transall Saga</i>	1
<i>Violet and Claire</i>	1
<i>Virgin Suicides</i>	1
<i>A Walk to Remember</i>	1
<i>The Way of the Samurai</i>	1
The Wheel of Time series	1
World War II books	1

Table 2.9. Other Interests That Helped 16-Year-Olds

<i>Interests</i>	<i>Responses</i>
Magazines	4
Internet sites on colleges	2
Music	2
Online literature	1
Newspapers	1
Spiritual/philosophical books	1
All literature	1

Table 2.10. Books That Helped 17-Year-Olds (239 Responses)

<i>Books</i>	<i>Responses</i>
None	117
Bible	31
Chicken Soup books	16
<i>Don't Sweat the Small Stuff</i>	4
<i>The Catcher in the Rye</i>	3
<i>Ironman</i>	2
Left Behind series	2
<i>A Man for All Seasons</i>	2
<i>Of Mice and Men</i>	2
<i>The Prophet</i>	2
<i>Allegory of the Cave</i>	1
<i>Atlas Shrugged</i>	1
<i>Black Like Me</i>	1
Books by John Grisham	1
Books on coping skills and psychology	1
<i>Catch 22</i>	1
<i>A Child Called It</i>	1
<i>Death of a Salesman</i>	1
<i>Divine Secrets of the Ya-Ya Sisterhood</i>	1
Emerson's "Self Reliance"	1
<i>Ender's Game</i>	1
<i>The Four Agreements</i>	1
<i>The Giver</i>	1
<i>Go Ask Alice</i>	1
<i>The Grapes of Wrath</i>	1
<i>The Great Gatsby</i>	1
<i>Guideposts for Teens</i> (magazine)	1
Harry Potter books	1
<i>How I Play Golf</i> (by Tiger Woods)	1
<i>Huckleberry Finn</i>	1
<i>I Kissed Dating Goodbye</i>	1
<i>Leap of Faith</i>	1
<i>Let the Circle Be Unbroken</i>	1
<i>Lord of the Flies</i>	1
<i>Love Is a Dog from Hell</i>	1
<i>Man's Search for Meaning</i>	1
<i>Mere Christianity</i>	1
<i>On Death and Dying</i>	1
<i>On the Road</i>	1
Ophelia books	1
<i>Ordinary People</i>	1

(continues)

Table 2.10. Books That Helped 17-Year-Olds (239 Responses)

Books	Responses
<i>The Others</i>	1
<i>The Perks of Being a Wallflower</i>	1
<i>The Power of One</i>	1
<i>Psycho Cybernetics</i>	1
<i>Roll of Thunder Hear My Cry</i>	1
<i>The Scarlet Letter</i>	1
<i>Self-Analysis</i> (by L. Ron Hubbard)	1
<i>Seven Habits of Highly Effective Teenagers</i>	1
<i>She's Come Undone</i>	1
<i>The Skin I'm In</i>	1
<i>The Sound and the Fury</i>	1
<i>The Sparrow</i>	1
<i>The Stranger</i>	1
<i>The Sun Also Rises</i>	1
<i>Tao Te Ching</i>	1
<i>The Teen Zone</i>	1
<i>Tess of the d'Urbervilles</i>	1
<i>Thus Spake Zarathustra</i>	1
<i>To Kill a Mockingbird</i>	1
<i>Tuesdays with Morrie</i>	1
<i>What to Say When You Talk to Yourself</i>	1
<i>Who Moved My Cheese?</i>	1
<i>Xenocide</i>	1

Table 2.11. Other Interests That Helped 17-Year-Olds

Interests	Responses
Poetry (Robert Frost, etc.)	4
Quotes	2
College brochures	1
Books on mechanics	1
Literature in general	1
Movies	1
Music	1
Online reports	1
Pamphlets on the military	1
Short stories	1

Table 2.12. Books That Helped 18-Year-Olds (64 Responses)

Books	Responses
None	28
Bible	6
<i>But What About Me?</i>	2
<i>Cyrano de Bergerac</i>	2
<i>The Alchemist</i>	1
Book of Mormon	1
<i>Catcher in the Rye</i>	1
<i>Chicken Soup for the Expecting Mother</i>	1
<i>Chicken Soup for the Teenage Soul</i>	1
<i>A Child Called It</i>	1
<i>The Coldest Winter Ever</i>	1
<i>Good in Bed</i>	1
<i>A Heartbreaking Work of Staggering Genius</i>	1
<i>Inferno</i>	1
Lord of the Rings trilogy	1
<i>The Nicomachean Ethics</i>	1
<i>The Once and Future King</i>	1
<i>The Poison Tree</i>	1
<i>The Screwtape Letters</i>	1
<i>Slaughterhouse Five</i>	1
<i>Still Following Christ in a Consumer Society</i>	1
<i>The Teenage Boy's Handbook</i>	1
<i>Ten Stupid Things Men Do to Mess Up Their Lives</i>	1
<i>Till We Have Faces</i>	1
<i>Why Me, Sunshine?</i>	1
Xanth books	1

Table 2.13. Types of Books Recommended by Teens to Their Peers

Types of books	Responses	Percent
None	626	44.5%
Chicken Soup books	187	13%
Bible	167	12%
Self-help	132	9.4%
Young adult	131	9.3%
Classics	49	3.5%
Magazines, movies, music, newspaper, the Internet	72	5.2%
Poetry	1	0.07%
Bestsellers	29	2.1%
Couldn't remember the title	13	0.92%
Totals	1407	100%

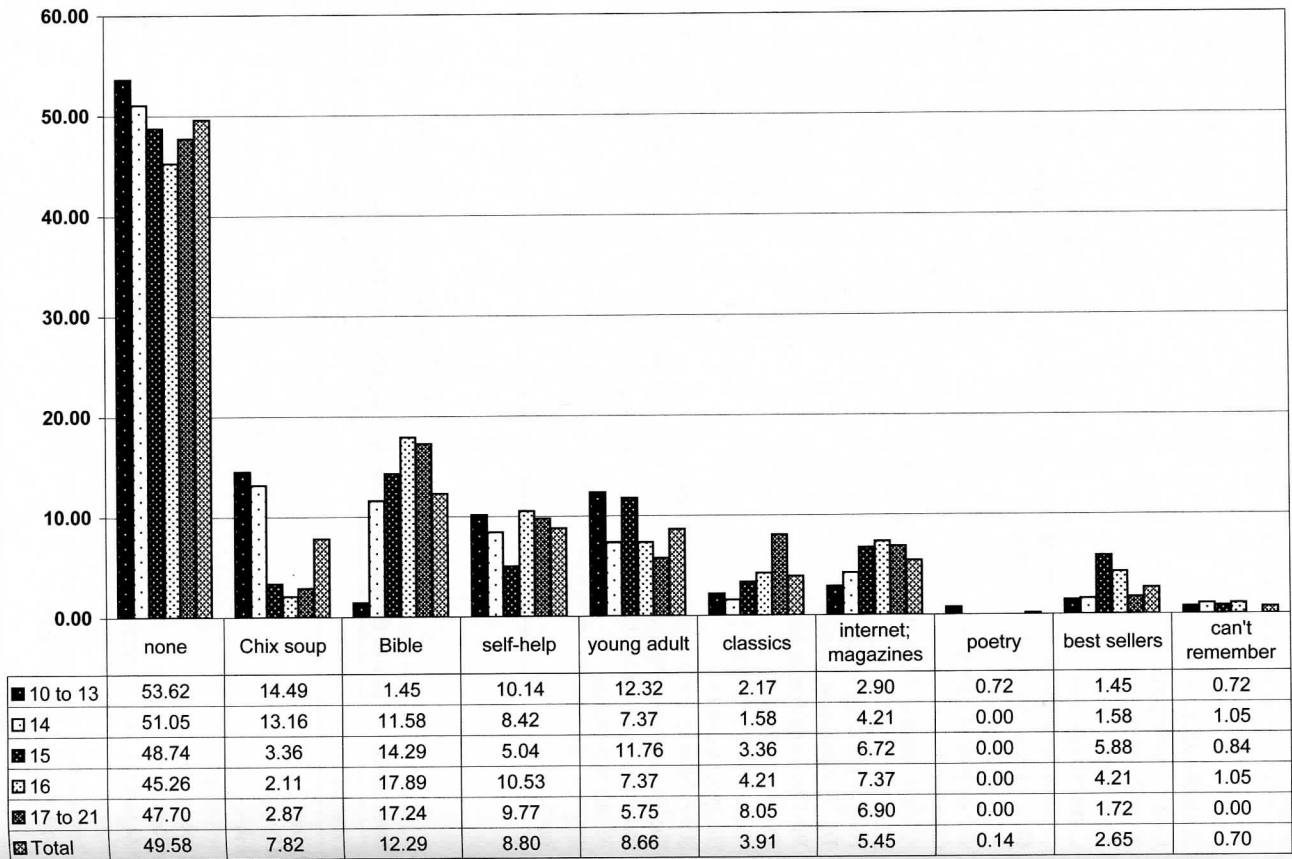


Figure 2.3. Books Recommended by Males (% of 726)

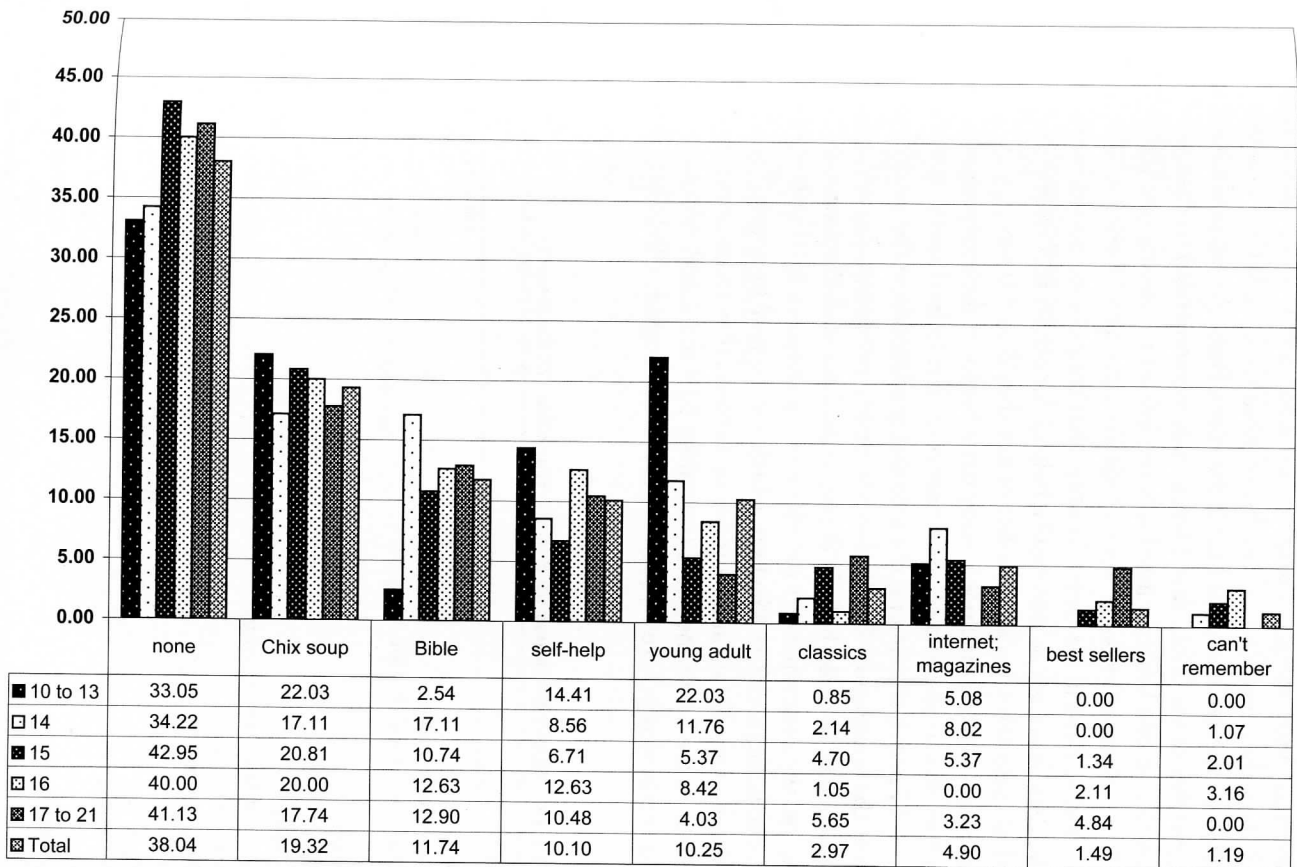


Figure 2.4. Books Recommended by Females (% of 680)

As mentioned earlier, 12-year-olds included magazine as a category they'd recommend. Interestingly, though, they listed fewer books they'd recommend than they included on the list of what they read. One example not included on this recommended list is the Harry Potter books (see table 2.14).

A number of the books that 13-year-olds recommended to their peers are not on the list of what they listed as being helped by reading (see tables 2.15 and 2.16). Some of these books include *Tuesdays with Morrie*, *A Wrinkle in Time*, and *A Wind in the Door*. Possibly what they choose to read for themselves, they don't see as necessarily helpful for others and maybe they had heard of these other books, whether or not they'd read them.

Fourteen-year-olds included many more books in their recommendations than they did in the lists of what they read that helped them, as shown in tables 2.17 and 2.18. Among the interesting additions in the recommended list are the writings of Dr. Phil—this clearly represents a popular culture trend—as well as books by Judy Blume, *Hard Love*, and *The Screwtape Letters*. Books on the recommended list also cover a sweep of ages with books like *Tuck Everlasting* and *The Wanderer*, which can be read by younger readers.

Fifteen-year-olds again have many more books they recommend than they included in the books they read (see tables 2.19 and 2.20). A number of the books recommended are frequently part of the English curriculum in grade

Table 2.14. Books Recommended by 12-Year-Olds (75 Responses)

Books	Responses
None	27
Chicken Soup books	13
<i>Are You There God? It's Me Margaret</i>	2
<i>Cages</i>	2
<i>Mandy</i>	2
<i>Monster</i>	2
<i>The Other</i>	2
<i>Summer of My German Soldier</i>	2
<i>Beyond the Glory</i>	1
DARE pamphlet	1
<i>Hoops</i>	1
<i>The Lost Boy</i>	1
Nancy Drew books	1
<i>Slam</i>	1
<i>Strategies for Teens</i>	1
<i>A Walk to Remember</i>	1

Table 2.15. Books Recommended by 13-Year-Olds (172 Responses)

Books	Responses
None	67
Chicken Soup books	31
<i>Holes</i>	7
<i>Coming Clean</i>	4
<i>She Said Yes</i>	4
Bible	3
Harry Potter books	3
<i>Girl's Guide to Growing Up</i>	2
<i>Go Ask Alice</i>	2
<i>Look to the Stars</i>	2
The Pit Dragon trilogy	2
Alice series	1
<i>Annie's Baby</i>	1
<i>Artemis Fowl</i>	1
Biography of Michael Jordan	1
Books by Lurlene McDaniel	1
Books by Phyllis Naylor	1
<i>A Child Called It</i>	1
Cooper Adventure Series books	1
<i>The Diary of Anne Frank</i>	1
<i>Everything on a Waffle</i>	1
<i>Far Apart, Yet So Close</i>	1
Georgia series	1
<i>The Godfather</i>	1
<i>Hatchet</i>	1
<i>The Hobbit</i>	1
<i>I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings</i>	1
<i>Just Ella</i>	1
Left Behind books	1
<i>Life Guides</i>	1
<i>Life in the Fat Lane</i>	1
<i>The Lion, the Witch, and the Wardrobe</i>	1
<i>Make Lemonade</i>	1
<i>Merlin</i>	1
<i>Of Mice and Men</i>	1
<i>Peace Like a River</i>	1
<i>Please Help Me God</i>	1
<i>Sisterhood of the Traveling Pants</i>	1
<i>Stargirl</i>	1
<i>Sweet Valley High</i>	1
<i>Teen Heart</i>	1
<i>Tuesdays with Morrie</i>	1
<i>Where's My Horse Anyway?</i>	1
<i>A Wind in the Door</i>	1
<i>A Wrinkle in Time</i>	1

Table 2.16. Types of Reading Material Recommended by 13-Year-Olds

Reading materials	Responses
Advantoon books	1
Biographies	1
Magazines (<i>Teen</i> and <i>People</i>)	1
The Internet	1
Newspapers	1
Garfield and Peanuts comics	1
Books from the REAP team meetings	1

10. Such titles included *All Quiet on the Western Front*, *Les Miserables*, and *Siddhartha*. Some surprising recommendations are *Hatchet* by Gary Paulsen and *Goosebumps*, which are frequently read by those in the 11–13 age group.

A title appearing in the 15-year-old list of recommendations which is also on the recommended list of the 16- and 17-year-olds is *Corazon a Corazon*. The lists of books read and recommended are more similar for the 16- and 17-year-olds than for any of the earlier groups (see tables 2.21 through 2.24).

The list of books recommended by those 18 and older (see table 2.25) is the one list of all those included which is nearly entirely different from the books the respondents in this age group said they were helped by reading. I am not sure I can identify any one reason for this. These teens closest to adulthood may simply have a sense that what they read may or may not help their peers.

Following the top twenty books listed in table 2.26, several books were named by four respondents, but these are too numerous to be significant.

Concluding Remarks

At first glance, starting with the books that 12-year-olds read and found helped them, some books seem more “adult” than might be expected—*The Divine Secrets of the Ya-Ya Sisterhood*, *Sisterhood of the Traveling Pants*, or *Monster*, for example. Yet these selections all deal with some universal themes and connect specifically to family life—healthy or unhealthy. As I noted earlier, family ranked high for sources of guidance, and “family issues” was listed as a significant issue, in the lives of many respondents 13 and younger.

Moving to the lists generated by 13-year-olds, a couple of surprising selections include *Coming Clean* and *A Child Called It*. When I read *A Child Called It*, I struggled in reading about the horrendous life David Peltzer experienced

Table 2.17. Books Recommended by 14-Year-Olds (377 Responses)

Books	Responses
None	154
Chicken Soup books	63
Bible	53
<i>A Child Called It</i>	8
Harry Potter books	7
<i>The Outsiders</i>	4
<i>Be An Eleven</i>	3
<i>Ender's Game</i>	3
<i>Life in the Fat Lane</i>	3
Lord of the Rings trilogy	3
<i>Seven Habits of Highly Effective Teenagers</i>	3
<i>She Said Yes</i>	3
<i>A Walk to Remember</i>	3
Biographies and autobiographies of role models	2
Books with prayers in them	2
<i>Catcher in the Rye</i>	2
Dr. Phil writings	2
<i>The Giver</i>	2
<i>Hard Love</i>	2
<i>Holes</i>	2
<i>The Lost Boy</i>	2
<i>The Poisonwood Bible</i>	2
<i>Speak</i>	2
<i>Star Girl</i>	2
<i>To Kill a Mockingbird</i>	2
<i>The Adventure</i>	1
<i>All Quiet on the Western Front</i>	1
<i>Beach Music</i>	1
<i>The Blue Day Book</i>	1
<i>Blue Hole</i>	1
Books by Judy Blume	1
Books by Isaac Asimov	1
<i>Bud, Not Buddy</i>	1
<i>Cane River</i>	1
<i>Cannery Row</i>	1
<i>Captains Courageous</i>	1
<i>Catch Me If You Can</i>	1
<i>Charms for the Easy Life</i>	1
<i>Clan of the Cave Bear</i>	1
<i>Corazon a Corazon</i>	1
<i>Cut</i>	1
<i>Dr. Humor</i>	1

(continues)

Table 2.17. Books Recommended by 14-Year-Olds (377 Responses)

Books	Responses
<i>The Face on the Milk Carton</i>	1
<i>Freak the Mighty</i>	1
<i>Girl's Life</i>	1
<i>Girls Speak Out</i>	1
<i>Great Expectations</i>	1
<i>Heartland</i>	1
<i>Homecoming</i>	1
<i>Hoops</i>	1
<i>The House on Mango Street</i>	1
<i>Joy Luck Club</i>	1
<i>King of the Wind</i>	1
<i>Life Strategies for Teens</i>	1
<i>The Little Engine That Could</i>	1
<i>The Little Prince</i>	1
<i>Lottery Rose</i>	1
<i>Love You Like a Sister</i>	1
<i>A Man to Watch the Mountain</i>	1
<i>The Maze</i>	1
<i>Northwest Passage</i>	1
<i>The Odyssey</i>	1
<i>Of Mice and Men</i>	1
<i>The Oldest Rookie</i>	1
<i>Outside Shot</i>	1
<i>Pay It Forward</i>	1
<i>The Phantom Tollbooth</i>	1
<i>Please Understand Me</i>	1
<i>The Prayer of Jabez</i>	1
<i>The Princess Diaries</i>	1
<i>Reviving Ophelia</i>	1
<i>Savage Nation</i>	1
<i>The Scarlet Letter</i>	1
<i>The Screwtape Letters</i>	1
<i>Seven Habits of Highly Effective People</i>	1
<i>Sisterhood of the Traveling Pants</i>	1
<i>Slam</i>	1
Sports stories	1
<i>Sweet Valley High</i>	1
<i>Tiger Eyes</i>	1
<i>Tuck Everlasting</i>	1
<i>The Wanderer</i>	1
<i>Where the Red Fern Grows</i>	1
<i>You Don't Know Me</i>	1

Table 2.18. Types of Reading Material and Pursuits Recommended by 14-Year-Olds

Reading Materials and Pursuits	Responses
Music	2
Poetry	2
College catalogues/magazines	1
The Internet	1
Writing a book	1
Movies	1
Newspapers	1

from the time he was five. It seemed nearly impossible that a parent or parents could treat any child this way. When I considered the issues listed—the responses in the original database indicating abuse by parents or stepparents or a parent's friend—I noted that the number of young people who are abused by parents is sadly high. The national news recently presented a story about a couple in New Jersey who did foster care; among the story's shocking details were that four of the boys in this foster home had been starved. All four weighed only 50 pounds, even a 19-year-old. Remembering how David Peltzer had also been starved, I saw how, for any young person affected by such cruelty and unable to talk about the treatment for fear of retribution, the David Peltzer series might indeed "save lives."

Given the high percentage of respondents indicating peer pressure as a major issue in their lives, *Coming Clean* also made sense as a selection. Similar to the DARE pamphlet or other motivational books, no doubt this title is helpful. The question for teachers or others guiding teens may be whether these books are the best that adolescents could be reading. In chapter 4, I provide a number of titles that address peer pressure or show teens in the struggle to do what they know is best despite what the "crowd" is doing. My goal is to get more of these books into the hands of young adults.

The frequency on all the lists of the various Chicken Soup books, primarily *Chicken Soup for the Teenage Soul*, again indicates that these are helpful for advice and provide stories that teens want to read. The number of books fitting the self-help category is also fairly high. Once more, the wording of Question 3 on the survey (about books that have "helped you with the issues that challenge you") may have led teens to respond with works that literally address issues like pressure, stress, self-esteem, and the like. The question of quality arises again—how do we help adolescent readers find the books that can take these readers into the realm of more complex literary styles and

Table 2.19. Books Recommended by 15-Year-Olds (269 Responses)

Books	Responses
None	112
Bible	34
Chicken Soup books	34
<i>Les Miserables</i>	4
<i>Speak</i>	4
<i>The Outsiders</i>	3
Books by Clive Cussler	2
<i>Cleopatra, Queen of Egypt</i>	2
<i>Ender's Game</i>	2
<i>Freak, the Mighty</i>	2
<i>Hatchet</i>	2
Lord of the Rings trilogy	2
<i>Of Mice and Men</i>	2
<i>All Quiet on the Western Front</i>	1
<i>Animal Farm</i>	1
<i>Atlas Shrugged</i>	1
<i>Baby Help</i>	1
Books by Agatha Christie	1
Books by Matt Christopher	1
<i>Call of the Chetulu</i>	1
<i>Call of the Wild</i>	1
<i>A Child Called It</i>	1
<i>A Doll's House</i>	1
<i>Don't Sweat the Small Stuff</i>	1
<i>Dracula</i>	1
<i>Eastbay</i>	1
<i>Fallen Angels</i>	1
<i>Fear and Loathing in Las Vegas</i>	1
Goosebumps books	1
<i>The Green Mile</i>	1
<i>Guts</i>	1
<i>I Want to Live</i>	1
Left Behind books	1
<i>Let's Roll</i>	1
<i>Lisa Bright and Dark</i>	1
<i>The Lone Hunt</i>	1
<i>1984</i>	1
<i>The Pearl</i>	1
<i>The Prophet</i>	1
<i>Red Rabbit</i>	1
<i>Roll of Thunder, Hear My Cry</i>	1
<i>Siddhartha</i>	1
<i>Slander</i>	1

<i>SSN</i> (Tom Clancy)	1
<i>Stories for the Teen Heart</i>	1
"Thanatopsis"	1
<i>Though None Go with Me</i>	1
<i>Time to Let Go</i>	1
<i>To Kill a Mockingbird</i>	1
<i>Whale Talk</i>	1
<i>When the Last Leaf Falls</i>	1
<i>Where the Heart Is</i>	1
<i>Winnie the Pooh</i>	1

Table 2.20. Types of Reading Material and Pursuits Recommended by 15-Year-Olds

Reading materials and pursuits	Responses
Teen magazines	12
Journaling	2
Movies	2
Music	2
Autobiographies for teens	1
Pamphlets	1
Religious books	1

help them find the richness in so many of the YA titles? How do we connect the teens with works from the authors interviewed in chapter 3 of this book, as well as the many other writers who address the very same issues written about in the Chicken Soup series or in books like *Don't Sweat the Small Stuff* and who write much more powerful fiction?

The other work cited frequently is the Bible. It is not clear from any of the respondents what part or parts of the Bible they are indicating. I venture that they have selected portions, possibly books or chapters emphasized by clergy or youth ministers. There is little dispute that the Bible is a major work of Western civilization. From my experience teaching a course in *The Bible as Literature* on the university level, I hope to propose a curriculum guide for teaching the Bible in high school. This work is still in the planning stage.

In any of the age groups above there are also books that seem "younger" than the age group listing the book. *The Giver* is cited by 17-year-olds as are the Harry Potter books; the fact that these books are cited by older teens is a good sign of the range of the books and of the potential for such works to

Table 2.21. Books Recommended by 16-Year-Olds (190 Responses)

Books	Responses
None	75
Bible	33
Chicken Soup books	21
<i>Corazon a Corazon</i>	3
<i>Street Lawyer</i>	3
<i>Ender's Game</i>	2
Harry Potter books	2
Left Behind books	2
Lord of the Rings trilogy	2
<i>The Mists of Avalon</i>	2
<i>The Outsiders</i>	2
<i>Athletic Shorts</i>	1
Books by V. C. Andrews	1
Books by William Faulkner	1
Books by Jerry Jenkins	1
Books by Tim LaHaye	1
Books by Max Lucado	1
Books and poems by Edgar Allan Poe	1
Books by Danielle Steele	1
Books by John Steinbeck	1
Books by Jacqueline Wilson	1
Child of Prophecy series	1
Christianity	1
Dictionary	1
<i>The Divine Secrets of the Ya-Ya Sisterhood</i>	1
<i>Don't Sweat the Small Stuff</i>	1
<i>Dragon Dawn</i>	1
<i>Dune</i>	1
<i>Edge of Heaven</i>	1
<i>Gerald's Game</i>	1
<i>The Gift</i>	1
<i>The Giver</i>	1
<i>The Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy</i>	1
<i>The Hobbit</i>	1
<i>Holes</i>	1
<i>Howl</i>	1
<i>I Kissed Dating Goodbye</i>	1
<i>I Was a Teenage Fairy</i>	1
<i>Ironman</i>	1
<i>James and the Giant Peach</i>	1
<i>Jim the Boy</i>	1
<i>Leaves of Grass</i>	1
<i>Let the Circle Be Unbroken</i>	1

<i>Maxim</i> (magazine)	1
<i>Mustard</i>	1
<i>On the Road</i>	1
<i>One Day in the Life of Ivan Denisovitch</i>	1
<i>The Perks of Being a Wallflower</i>	1
<i>Places I Never Intended to Be</i>	1
<i>The Plague Tales</i>	1
<i>Rachel's Tears</i>	1
<i>Siddhartha</i>	1
<i>Sultan of Swat</i>	1
<i>Thus Spake Zarathustra</i>	1
<i>Virgin Suicides</i>	1
<i>The Way of the Clans</i>	1
<i>Way of the Samurai</i>	1
<i>The Wheels of Time</i>	1

Table 2.22. Types of Reading Material and Pursuits Recommended by 16-Year-Olds

Reading materials and pursuits	Responses
Magazines	3
All literature	1
Books on how drugs affect life	1
College catalogs	1
Internet	1
Movies	1
Music	1
Newspapers	1
Poetry	1
Quotes	1
Radio	1
Spiritual books	1
Writing your own diary	1
Writings about teens	1

be read on many levels. *The Giver* holds many levels of meaning—many that can't be grasped by students in grades 5–8. The lists share what the youth in “the audience” said, and that is their power. I have attempted to include as many of these “teen recommended” works as possible in the annotations given in chapters 4 through 8. Maybe the works cited on the lists above are more familiar to teachers and parents than I think, but I hope seeing the selections provides you with some insight into the adolescents you teach and/or parent.

Table 2.23. Books Recommended by 17-Year-Olds (239 Responses)

Books	Responses
None	109
Bible	36
Chicken Soup books	27
<i>Don't Sweat the Small Stuff</i>	3
<i>George Washington's Rules of Civility</i>	2
<i>The Great Gatsby</i>	2
Left Behind books	2
<i>Man's Search for Meaning</i>	2
<i>Slouching toward Gomorrah</i>	2
<i>Allegory of the Cave</i>	1
<i>Angels Watching over the Earth</i>	1
<i>Anger Is My Choice</i>	1
<i>Animal Farm</i>	1
<i>Black Like Me</i>	1
<i>The Bluest Eye</i>	1
Books by Piers Anthony	1
Books by Joyce Brothers	1
Books by Patricia Cornwell	1
Books by Stephen King	1
Books by Anne Rice	1
Books by Dr. Seuss	1
<i>Catch 22</i>	1
<i>Cheaper by the Dozen</i>	1
<i>The Chosen</i>	1
<i>Corazon a Corazon</i>	1
<i>The Crucible</i>	1
<i>Divine Secrets of the Ya-Ya Sisterhood</i>	1
<i>The Fifth Elephant</i>	1
<i>The Forgiven</i>	1
<i>The Four Agreements</i>	1
<i>Girl Talk</i>	1
<i>The Giver</i>	1
<i>God's Little Devotional for Teens</i>	1
<i>Go Dog Go</i>	1
<i>The Grapes of Wrath</i>	1
<i>The Great Divorce</i>	1
<i>Green Eggs and Ham</i>	1
Harry Potter books	1
<i>Hockey Enforcers</i>	1
<i>I Kissed Dating Goodbye</i>	1
<i>Interpretation of Dreams</i>	1
<i>Joy Luck Club</i>	1
<i>The Jungle</i>	1

<i>Les Miserables</i>	1
<i>Let the Circle Be Unbroken</i>	1
<i>Like Water for Chocolate</i>	1
<i>Mere Christianity</i>	1
<i>A Midsummer Night's Dream</i>	1
<i>Native Son</i>	1
<i>Nigger</i>	1
<i>Night</i>	1
<i>1984</i>	1
<i>Of Mice and Men</i>	1
<i>On the Road</i>	1
<i>The Other Side of the Mountain</i>	1
<i>Pride and Prejudice</i>	1
<i>The Prophet</i>	1
<i>Psycho Cybernetics</i>	1
<i>Roll of Thunder, Hear My Cry</i>	1
<i>The Scarlet Letter</i>	1
<i>The Screwtape Letters</i>	1
<i>Self-Analysis</i> (L. Ron Hubbard)	1
<i>Seven Habits of Highly Effective Teens</i>	1
<i>The Skin I'm In</i>	1
Socratic dialogues	1
<i>Starship Troopers</i>	1
<i>The Stranger</i>	1
<i>A Tale of Two Cities</i>	1
<i>Tao Te Ching</i>	1
<i>The Traveler's Gift</i>	1
<i>The Trial</i>	1
<i>What to Say When You Talk to Yourself</i>	1
<i>When God Writes Your Love Life</i>	1
<i>Who Moved My Cheese?</i>	1
<i>Wild at Heart</i>	1
<i>Wooden</i> (autobiography)	1
<i>The Worthing Saga</i>	1

While the days of “reading for pleasure” may be gone, I believe that teens can be captured by many of the authors and books in the continually expanding field of YA literature. Parents, teachers, and librarians need to be better “salespeople” for the books, and teens themselves need to share what they like with their peers.

Table 2.24. Types of Reading Material and Pursuits Recommended by 17-Year-Olds

<i>Reading material and pursuits</i>	<i>Responses</i>
Magazines	9
Books that inspire	1
Books about emotional issues	1
College brochures	1
Essays by Aquinas, Emerson, Thoreau, Voltaire	1
Newspapers	1
A philosophy class	1
Writing from peers	1

Table 2.25. Books Recommended by 18- to 21-Year-Olds (64 Responses)

<i>Books</i>	<i>Responses</i>
None	8
Bible	3
Other	3
Catholic Youth Bible	2
<i>Chronicles of Narnia</i>	2
<i>The Bluest Eye</i>	1
<i>Catcher in the Rye</i>	1
Chicken Soup books	1
<i>Clan of the Cave Bear</i>	1
<i>Gates of Fire</i>	1
<i>Go Ask Alice</i>	1
<i>Harley Like a Person</i>	1
<i>I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings</i>	1
<i>Night</i>	1
<i>Plain Song</i>	1
Poetry	1
<i>Riding in Cars with Boys</i>	1
<i>Skin I'm In</i>	1
<i>Star Girl</i>	1
<i>When I Was Puerto Rican</i>	1

Table 2.26. Top 20 Books Read and/or Recommended

<i>Books</i>	<i>Responses</i>
Chicken Soup books	357
Bible	291
Harry Potter books	23
<i>A Child Called It</i>	21
<i>Holes</i>	16
<i>The Outsiders</i>	13
Lord of the Rings trilogy	12
<i>Ender's Game</i>	11
<i>She Said Yes</i>	11
<i>Speak</i>	11
<i>Don't Sweat the Small Stuff</i>	10
<i>Go Ask Alice</i> and <i>Alice</i> series	10
<i>Seven Habits of Highly Successful Teenagers</i> (or of <i>Highly Effective People</i>)	9
<i>Catcher in the Rye</i>	8
Left Behind books	8
<i>Of Mice and Men</i>	8
<i>To Kill a Mockingbird</i>	7
<i>A Walk to Remember</i>	7
<i>Corazon a Corazon</i>	5
<i>Life in the Fat Lane</i>	5