

A PARENT'S GUIDE TO

# INFLUENCERS



Connecting Parents, Teens & Jesus  
in a Disconnected World

# **AXIS PARENT'S GUIDES SERIES**

A Parent's Guide to Teen FOMO

A Parent's Guide to Influencers

A Parent's Guide to Instagram

A Parent's Guide to TikTok

A Parent's Guide to YouTube



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*A Parent's Guide to Influencers*

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70% of teens think that YouTubers are more reliable than celebrities and 88% of consumers trust online recommendations as much as face-to-face recommendations. Social media influencers are real people, and they're more likely to be authentic and to interact with their audience, so brands are starting to take note.

**DIGITAL INFORMATION WORLD**



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# A LETTER FROM AXIS

*Dear Reader,*

We're Axis, and since 2007, we've been creating resources to help connect parents, teens, and Jesus in a disconnected world. We're a group of gospel-minded researchers, speakers, and content creators, and we're excited to bring you the best of what we've learned about making meaningful connections with the teens in your life.

This parent's guide is designed to help start a conversation. Our goal is to give you enough knowledge that you're able to ask your teen informed questions about their world. For each guide, we spend weeks reading, researching, and interviewing parents and teens in order to distill everything you need to know about the topic at hand. We encourage you to read the whole thing and then to use the questions we include to get the conversation going with your teen—and then to follow the conversation wherever it leads.

As Douglas Stone, Bruce Patton, and Sheila Heen point out in their book *Difficult Conversations*, “Changes in attitudes and behavior rarely come about because of arguments, facts, and attempts to persuade. How often do *you* change your values and beliefs—or whom you love or what you want in life—based on something someone tells you? And how likely are you to do so when the person who is trying to change you doesn’t seem fully aware of the reasons you see things differently in the first place?”<sup>1</sup> For whatever reason, when we believe that others are trying to understand *our* point of view, our defenses usually go down, and we’re more willing to listen to *their* point of view. The rising generation is no exception.

So we encourage you to ask questions, to listen, and then to share your heart with your teen. As we often say at Axis, discipleship happens where conversation happens.

Sincerely,  
Your friends at Axis

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<sup>1</sup> Douglas Stone, Bruce Patton, and Sheila Heen, *Difficult Conversations: How to Discuss What Matters Most*, rev. ed. (New York: Penguin Books, 2010), 137.



**WHEN THEY  
TALK, WE  
LISTEN.**

**SOCIAL MEDIA IS CHANGING** day by day. What started as a way to connect with family and friends and share life has turned into marketing, advertising, and selling products to a larger online community. As many as 95 million photos and videos are posted to Instagram every day.<sup>1</sup> And 500 hours of video are uploaded to YouTube every single minute.<sup>2</sup> You can get lost down a rabbit trail of endless content that spans everything from funny dog videos to deep posts about religion and philosophy. That's a lot to keep up with—or compete with if you're trying to get your content out there.

If we were to be on social media platforms for only two hours a day, that would tally up to over five years of time over the course of our lives.<sup>3</sup> As of 2019, teens are spending more than seven hours a day using media.<sup>4</sup> That's more time

than they spend sleeping at night sometimes. And with people in general spending more time than ever online, brands, movements, and celebrities alike have all realized the power of social media to persuade people to engage in a desired behavior.<sup>5</sup> As a result, a whole new animal has been born: *the influencer*.





**WHAT'S AN  
INFLUENCER?**

**TECHNICALLY, WE'RE ALL INFLUENCERS** in one way or another, but the term is used specifically to refer to a person who uses their social media presence and platforms to influence others to believe, buy, or do something (or commonly, all three). An influencer ultimately uses their power to market products (their own or someone else's) to their large online following, and by doing so, they also make money, which is why it's now considered a job.<sup>6</sup> Many influencers start out on Instagram or YouTube with a small audience and build it by posting consistently and making connections with their followers.<sup>7</sup> Typically, they make a name for themselves inside a niche and become an authority there.

You'll find influencers in every type of niche. They can build brands around anything—like eating healthy or creating art—and they share their lives with people

who are eager to listen. Some examples are:

- Journalists who travel throughout the country and world, documenting their experiences
- Bloggers who write about everything from life experiences to product reviews
- Bookstagrammers who post photos of their bookshelves, current reads, and more<sup>8</sup>
- Makeup artists who post tutorials, share favorite brands, and more
- YouTubers who create daily content, including vlogs
- Video gamers who livestream video games and provide commentary as they go through different levels

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