

A PARENT'S GUIDE TO

# EATING DISORDERS



Connecting Parents, Teens & Jesus  
in a Disconnected World

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TO EATING DISORDERS**



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*A Parent's Guide to Eating Disorders*

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We turn skeletons into goddesses  
and look to them as if they might  
teach us how not to need.

**MARYA HORNbacher,**  
***WASTED: A MEMOIR OF ANOREXIA***  
***AND BULIMIA***



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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.



**MENTAL HEALTH,  
PHYSICAL  
MANIFESTATIONS**

**BESIDES INCREASES** in mental health issues such as anxiety and depression, today's teens also face increasing risks of developing eating disorders as a way to cope with their reality.<sup>1</sup> Because there are myriad websites and organizations dedicated to educating the public about eating disorders and to helping sufferers find lasting recovery, this guide will hopefully serve to educate you on how technology and culture contribute to the problem. In addition, we hope to provide a balanced Christian perspective on how to find true healing from a disease that affects both young and old, male and female, Christian and non-Christian alike. *(Note: we did our best not to link to sites that could be triggering for those struggling with eating disorders, except when necessary. If you choose to search for things mentioned in this guide, please do so at*

*your own risk. It can be simultaneously horrifying and heartbreaking.)*

**Disclaimer:** *Information contained in this resource is intended only to increase knowledge and provide faith-based encouragement to users on the subjects of eating disorders, mental health, and other related issues. Axis does not intend to offer medical advice or treatment of any kind. The tools we offer are intended as tools only, the use and results of which should be confirmed by a qualified health-care professional. This information is not a replacement for diagnosis or treatment by a professional. Axis cannot be held responsible for actions taken without professional medical guidance.*



Besides increases in mental health issues such as anxiety and depression, today's teens also face increasing risks of developing eating disorders as a way to cope with their reality.

