Oh, Shift! for Teens is a must-read. Witty and direct, it empowers teens to obtain the three things they all crave (besides their cell phones), independence, confidence, and better relationships.

- Dr. Michael Orit, Clinical Psychologist and Author of Generation Text: Raising Well Adjusted Kids In An Age Of Instant Everything

Oh, shift! for Teens

Get control of your life with a little f’in shift

Jennifer Powers and Mark Tucker
Preface

We don’t have it all figured out, but what we do we want to share. Of course, we were teens once too (back when Lady Gaga was only Baby Gaga-Goo-Goo and when a flip phone was the size of a Razor scooter.) But things have clearly changed since then. That’s why we went straight to the experts – YOU, the teens of today, to hear what you’re experiencing, feeling, thinking and needing. We’ve heard you and we “get” you. Now we want you to get this…

This book can change your life.
But not in one hour, one day or even one read.
It will show you how to take baby steps towards shifts that will collectively make a huge difference.

It will invite you to look at life differently.
It will give you power and control.
It will get you shift-faced.

We promise.
Jennifer: Now it’s time to share these tools with the teens of today, who could also benefit from taking a good shift.

Mark: You’re right! It’s not easy being a teen. They’re challenged with finding friends, establishing identities, performing well in school, taking on new responsibilities all the while being expected to emerge as functional adults.

Jennifer: Oh man, don’t remind me.

Mark: Plus, teens are subjected to a huge amount of social pressure. Keeping up with the latest styles, technology, and trends can be super stressful.
Jennifer: Yeah, that’s kind of how it was when I was a teen.

Mark: Yep. And imagine doing all that with the added distraction of devices like smart phones, IPods, and computers.

Jennifer: Ouch! Good point.

Mark: And nowadays the payoff for their efforts looks less and less rewarding. Instead of competing with the other kids for entry level jobs, now young people are competing with unemployed adults and overseas workers. Their futures can look downright scary.

Teens need the life changing tools in *Oh, shift!* now more than ever, Jennifer. So how can they make shifting work for them?

Jennifer: I’m glad you asked, Mark. It simply starts by changing one little letter.

Hmmm. That reminds me of a story…
I was in my second year of college when I had the opportunity to study abroad in Spain.

My host family was nice. Rich too.

Mama Encarnita was sweeter than sugar and as wide as she was tall. An amazing cook and a lover of red wine, she became my instant bestie.

Jose, the host dad, didn’t say much, but when he did he was questioning the “políti co Americano” which I knew (or cared) little about. So we were happy to simply say hello in passing at six in the morning when he was waking up for work and I was stumbling in from the never-ending party scene on the streets of Granada.

They had a daughter my age named Rosario, who loved to poke fun at my big Jersey hair and my horrible Spanish accent. Fun stuff.

I wasn’t there two weeks when it happened.

The moment that will go down in history.

The story that Encarnita’s family will tell every friend, neighbor and exchange student for as long as they walk the earth.
Mama Encarnita thought it would be fun to invite some extended family members to come meet me, so she planned a special dinner. Oh, and it was special.

There we were, sixteen of us. Cousins, in-laws, brothers and sisters, Rosario’s English teacher Susanna, and Pedro, the tobacco shop owner from across the street.

Dinner was served. The red wine was flowing and the mood became light. Mama Encarnita and her sister Anna made the most delicious dish I had ever put in my mouth; chicken stewed in a rich tomato sauce together with eggplant and capers and a strong dose of fresh garlic. One word: Yum-o-rama.

Self-conscious of my weight growing up, I was always hesitant to ask for seconds, especially around strangers. But I figured, when in Spain…EAT.

Soooo, in my best Spanish I asked for more chicken…

“Quiero más polla, por favor.”

Silence.

For three seconds.
Then an eruption of laughter so loud they could hear it in New Jersey. Wine and food went flying through noses clear across the table.

The women lost it. Pedro did a sign of the cross and got up to leave the room. Jose had a creepy grin on his face and his sixty-year-old brother Felipe looked aroused.

“What?”

I was definitely on the outside of an inside.

Rosario’s English teacher finally leaned over and let me in.

“Chicken is pollO not pollA!” she said through a busted gut.

I wasn’t surprised. I was, and still am, notorious for making that mistake. Masculine and feminine words just never made sense to me.

“So what? Is it really that funny?”

“Yes, you just said, ‘I want more penis, please!’”

Oh what a difference one little letter can make.
Oh, shift!

Just say it.
“Oh, shift!”

It’s really quite simple.

Change the word that brings you down
to a word that lifts you up.

The difference is one little letter.

And it’s a good one...

Go ahead. Slip it in there right
between the “i” and the “t” and
then say it out loud.
Now, believe it or not, for some people that’s a challenge.

Babs, one of Jen’s fellow New Jersey friends, admitted that it took her great levels of concentration and effort to say the word with the $f$.

Ahhhh, those Jersey girls.

But most people aren’t like Babs.

Changing a word is easy. We actually do this all day long.

When talking to children, old people, teachers and parents, we tend to choose the more intelligent-sounding alternatives over our lazy slanguage.

“Yeah” becomes “Yes.”

“What’s up?” becomes “How are you?”

“Dunno” becomes “I’m not sure.”

Or we censor our more colorful language and opt for the G-rated version. (Think: heck, darn, frickin’, geez.)

‘Nuff said.

Why do we do that?
The words we choose help us
be what we want to be.

We do it for our parents to be good kids.
We do it for our peers to be good friends.
We do it in class to be good students.
We do it on interviews to be good candidates.
We do it for our crushes to be more attractive.

Why stop there?

In the moments of solitude, when no one is around, you can choose your words so they create a good impression on your life.
Words give you **power** and **control**.

You are given a blank canvas each day.

Your words are your paint.
You are if you say you are.
You will if you say you will.

Tell yourself you suck at math and you will.
Tell yourself you’ll never get a date. Done.
Tell yourself you’re always late and you will be.
Tell yourself you’re fat. You got it.
Tell yourself you’ll bomb the test. OK. No problem.

You call it.
It’s your choice.
It’s your life.
Gym is my least favorite class. I’m not very athletic and I don’t like having to dress for it, especially in front of everyone else. I started to feel really anxious and nervous on the days I had gym class. I would say to myself, “I hate this!” “Why do I have to do this?” or, “You suck at sports and everyone knows it.”

Then I read somewhere that our words have a lot of power in them and I thought maybe I should start saying different things about gym so I could feel different. I started saying “I like gym.” or, “It’s kinda fun to get out of class.” And, “I’m a pretty good runner.” None of these were 100% true, but they weren’t completely false either. I just kept saying sentences like these every day before gym and I noticed that my nervousness went away a little bit. I still don’t love gym, but at least I don’t dread it like I used to. Kinda cool.

Jenna, 14

Yeah, Jenna. YOU’RE kinda cool.