

BOOK REVIEW

Good To Go: A Practical Guide to Adulthood

By

Kim Zarzour & Sharon E. McKay

Toronto: Penguin Canada, 2008, 528 pages

Reviewed by Janice Solem

Sometimes how-to books aren't much fun to read; this excellent book is an exception. Authors—and mothers—Kim Zarzour and Sharon McKay have written *Good To Go* for the young adults in their families who are leaving home for the first time. Not only do the authors provide a wealth of practical advice, but they do it respectfully with wit and clarity.

The 17 chapters in *Good To Go* cover a wide range of topics in three sections, the first of which is “**The Homefront.**” Chapter One, “Finding a Roof for Your Head,” is full of helpful items to know such as: a sample contract for a roommate, an apartment-viewing checklist, questions for the landlord, what to look for in a lease, moving in, setting up (what to buy first), and how to paint (pp. 13-39).

Chapter Two, “Home Maintenance,” covers trouble shooting for plumbing, appliances, and pest control. It also lists some excellent burglary prevention tips:

- Don't advertise to thieves a new purchase (computer, television, etc.) by putting the empty box outside. Instead rip up the box and turn it inside out.
- 40 percent of home invasions occur because a door or window was left unlocked. Lock the door behind you; install a peephole.
- Replace all locks immediately after moving into a new home.
- Record the serial numbers on all your cool stuff and put the list in a safe place.
- Secure a sliding glass door by laying a wooden pole along the base track.
- Consider getting an alarm system.
- Check out the local Neighbourhood Watch and/or connect with your neighbours. (p. 64)

The remaining chapters in this section deal with useful advice on housekeeping, cooking, and care of clothing.

Section Two (Body Basics) offers suggestions on eating, exercise, preventing illness, first aid, sexual health, and dealing with embarrassing bodily problems (bad breath, stinky feet, etc.). And anyone of us could benefit from the two full pages of “Dos” and “Don'ts” for eating right! I do take exception, however, to the authors' claim that artificial sweeteners can cause a surge of insulin which triggers a craving for more sweets (pp. 193-195). According to a nutritionist at the Saskatoon Health Region, “the jury is still out” on this subject, and further research is needed.

In the chapter on “When Good Bodies Go Bad . . . ,” the authors offer yet another of their many helpful checklists; this one deals with preventing skin cancer. We should look for:

A for asymmetrical shape

B for irregular borders (edges blurry or jagged)

C for color changes

D for diameter greater than the size of a pencil eraser

E for evolving—changing shape, size, colour, or symptoms (itching or bleeding for example). (p. 275)

Section Three (The Big Picture) begins with “Your Job, Your Career.” Templates are provided for a cover letter and for a resume. The job interview is covered in detail. A chapter on “Finances” follows; it talks about budgeting, banking, credit/debit cards, and a “What to Buy When” schedule. Completing this section are chapters on transportation, travel, etiquette, “And Another Thing . . .”—all chockfull of interesting and helpful information.

Interspersed throughout the book are numerous eye-catching items such as Troubleshooting, Cost Cutters, Pros & Cons; here are a few additional examples:

- **Tip:** Where to keep the garbage bag twist ties? At the bottom of the garbage can. When the bag is full, lift it out and there are the ties. They never get lost (p. 76).
- **Duh moment!:** Aspirin, Tylenol, and Advil are not all the same thing. They work differently. If you’re not sure which you need, ask your doctor or pharmacist. (p. 223)
- **More Than You Really Wanted to Know:** Avoid makeup counter samples. You can catch conjunctivitis from mascara or eyeliner, or pick up herpes from a lipstick sampler (p. 215)

And at the end of each chapter is a “Resources” section with extensive website listings.

Good To Go contains a wealth of information presented in a very reader-friendly way. It is available for loan at the Saskatoon Public Library, or it can be purchased at McNally Robinson Bookstore (\$24.00) — a great Christmas gift idea for the young adults in your family!

Janice Solem is a retired school counselor, co-editor of *Respectful, Responsible Parenting* and an active member of SAS. She and her husband, Bob, have three children and four grandchildren.