

Talk 16

Astra Perceptive, articulate, a streetwise school dropout with a learning disability.

Helen Daughter of Korean fundamentalist Christians, a high achiever struggling to balance two cultures.

Rhonda Brash, Black and ambitious, she hates math and loves the stage.

Erin Private school teen balancing a desire to be a fashion model with a drawerful of childhood toys.

Lina Spunky, hard-working daughter of Eastern Europeans, determined to find a boyfriend at any cost.

These are the five teenage girls who were chosen to appear in *Talk 16*, after an exhaustive eight-month search by filmmakers Janis Lundman and Adrienne Mitchell.

In the year that followed, the girls were interviewed and filmed at home, in school, at work and with their friends. The filmmakers' skill was such that the girls openly shared their secrets, frustrations and dreams, and their innermost thoughts about boys, drugs, peer pressure and self-esteem.

Talk 16 is divided into six chronological segments to facilitate classroom use. If desired, the film can be screened in its entirety. A user's guide including segment descriptions and discussion starters for both teens and adults can be found on the reverse of this jacket.

Produced by Back Alley Film Productions Ltd. in association with the National Film Board of Canada/Ontario Centre and CHCH Television, and with the participation of Telefilm Canada, the Ontario Film Development Corporation and Rogers Telefund.

Produced and Directed by Janis Lundman and Adrienne Mitchell
NFB Producer Silva Basmajian

115 minutes (in six parts)

Order number: C 9192 021



Closed captioned for the deaf and hard of hearing.
A decoder is required.



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P.O. Box 6100, Station A
Montreal, Quebec
H3C 3H5



Talk 16

Printed in Canada



VHS
113C
9192 021



From the National Film Board of Canada

Hormones play havoc.
Self-image in flux.

Five young women tell it like it is.

Talk 16

A candid chronicle of teen culture.

"Hilarious, absorbing, moving and terrifying. A superlative documentary."
Jay Scott, Globe & Mail

"... an unprecedented document of today's young female generation."
Melbourne Herald-Sun, Melbourne, Australia



Talk 16

HOW THE TEENS WERE CHOSEN

The filmmakers wanted a "mix" that would reflect the diversity of the Canadian population. Over an eight-month period, they interviewed 350 teenage girls from different racial and socio-economic backgrounds. Each girl was asked to draw a self-portrait and complete a questionnaire. A fifteen-minute videotape was made as an ad hoc screen test. Finally, five teens were selected to appear in the film.



PULL OUT FOR MORE INFORMATION.



Produced and
Directed by
**Janis Lundman
and Adrienne
Mitchell**

Director of
Photography
Deborah Parks

Narrator
Janis Lundman

Editor
Sally Paterson

Music Composed
and Performed by
Aaron Davis

Location Sound
Peter Sawade

Sound Editor
Steve Munro

Recording
Dino Pigat

NFB Producer
Silva Basmajian

NFB Executive
Producers
**Dennis Murphy
John Taylor**

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Distributed by the
National Film Board
of Canada

Colour

115 minutes

Order numbers:
C 0192 021 (film)
C 9192 021 (video)

DISCUSSION STARTERS FOR THE TEEN CLASSROOM

1. The teens in the film identified several problems in their lives. How serious do you think these really are?
2. Do you think the parents were as helpful as possible when it came to helping their daughters with their problems? What suggestions could you give the parents in order to improve their handling of the situation?
3. Teenagers tackle difficult issues from many perspectives. Do you think the girls in the film chose appropriate ways to handle contentious issues and situations?
4. Several families were represented in the film, each with their own definitions of what are tolerated behaviors and acceptable viewpoints. Which family was most like your own, or most like a family you would like to have?
5. The public at large is generally wary when they see groups of teenagers hanging around in public places, such as the mall, parks, stores, etc. As a teenager, how would you like to be treated in these situations?
6. Although many issues were covered in the film, it is impossible to deal with everything. As far as you are concerned, what important issues for your generation were not covered in this film?
7. Astra's final remark is "Don't judge us too quick." How do you think your parents' and grandparents' generations are judging your generation?
8. Do you think seeing this film will make it easier for your parents and teachers to understand teenagers?

DISCUSSION STARTERS FOR ADULTS

1. As the film demonstrates, helping teenagers develop self-esteem is a long, difficult, and challenging job for parents. Can you identify some of the strategies used by parents in the film that were successful in developing self-esteem?
2. The line between nurturing, supportive parental behavior and spoiling the children can sometimes be very thin. Give examples of situations where this line has been crossed.
3. Teenagers are very quick to capitalize on parental differences of opinion. As parents, how have you successfully minimized being pitted against each other over an issue related to your teenager?
4. The film tried to show each girl growing and maturing over a period of time. Focus on one girl and describe the changes you see in her over the length of the film.
5. Mothers: How are these girls' teen years different from your own?
Fathers: How are these girls different from the teenage girls of your youth?
6. Each girl speaks of issues that are important to her. How do you interpret and rate these issues in relation to the teenager's growing maturity?
7. Do you think this film has made it easier for you to understand and better parent your teenage daughters?

PART 1

19:45

Introductions

Astra, Lina, Rhonda, Helen, Erin and their families are introduced. The teens talk about school, boyfriends and their views on drugs and alcohol.

QUOTES FROM THE FILM FOR DISCUSSION

"(My parents) know nothing about me."
 "They don't teach us about violence."
 "I find it hard to communicate with my parents."
 "I'm a problem child."
 "I want to be treated like I'm 16, not 12."
 "I try to get along with everybody."
 "I have always been pressured to be a doctor, or a lawyer."
 "I'm living the life of a 40-year-old junkie."
 "I have to try everything."
 "... Math, oh my God! I get frustrated so I don't ask."
 "Drugs is a form of witchcraft."
 "I drink at a party with guys because I want to loosen up."

PART 2

20:00

Boys, Sex and Stereotypes

Lina looks for a boyfriend. Astra has a boyfriend, has left home and is pregnant. The girls discuss premarital sex, their peers and feminism.

QUOTES FROM THE FILM FOR DISCUSSION

"If I had a boyfriend, I would think of us as two equal people."
 "Premarital sex? Everyone wants it."
 "I'm totally against premarital sex because of my belief in God."
 "I can't stand B-girls."
 "Preppies look as if they shit in their jeans."
 "Ginos... they put so much hair spray, I don't know how their brain works."
 "I don't label myself."
 "If (my mother) had been in my face, I probably would have hit her."
 "Feminists are a bunch of lesbians."
 "Why should a woman not get a job just because she doesn't have a penis?"
 "Feminism is twisting biological things you cannot change."

PART 3

18:55

Spring Break

Erin quits the rowing team, attends a semi-formal dance and reflects on poverty in the Dominican Republic. Rhonda talks about racism in Los Angeles and discovers a former boyfriend is spreading rumours about her. Astra moves in with a friend and explores her learning disability. Helen supports herself with four jobs. Lina works at a dry cleaners.

QUOTES FROM THE FILM FOR DISCUSSION

"Even though I'm Canadian, I'm still Black."
 "My birthday wasn't special. I wanted a car."

"We did a lot of drugs last night, and it freaks you out."
 "I wear tons of make-up...zits."
 "I don't expect my parents to support me (now that I'm working)."
 "My Dad said I'm a quitter."
 "Ever since I was a kid, the school program never worked for me."

PART 4

16:15

Here Comes Summer

Rhonda tries out for a school play. Lina makes up customers for her cosmetics class, studies for final exams and loses her virginity. Astra has a new boyfriend. Helen has a birthday party, and Erin quits her summer job.

QUOTES FROM THE FILM FOR DISCUSSION

"The white girls got all the good parts (in the play)."
 "(My parents) want me to be the same working-class as them."
 "We did it in the woods. Going to the dentist is more fun."
 "(I have this) attraction to criminal-like guys."
 "We didn't use protection."

PART 5

20:00

Holidays

Rhonda vacations in Brooklyn. Erin competes in a national modeling show and relaxes at her parents' summer cottage. Helen is baptized and is given a new curfew. Lina and Astra choose new schools.

QUOTES FROM THE FILM FOR DISCUSSION

"(Guys) break our hearts."
 "Guys get respect. Girls get criticism for doing the same thing."
 "I had no one to talk to."
 "I am influenced by unbelievers."
 "My father thinks I'm fat."
 "I have to have an education to get a job."
 "I should have a curfew."
 "I wonder what I didn't learn in my past life."

PART 6

17:05

A Year in a Life

Astra is expelled from her new school and moves in with her boyfriend. Helen lives with her curfew. Rhonda has a part in a play. Lina makes a movie and negotiates at home for more freedom. Erin discovers she has cervical cancer.

QUOTES FROM THE FILM FOR DISCUSSION

"I'm scared of failing, that keeps me from going places."
 "There are no small parts, just small actors."
 "I'm like a walking hormone."
 "I'd rather be childish my whole life."
 "I want to break the cycle."
 "I take all these problems home with me."
 "Don't judge us too quick."