BEING a teenager was never easy, but today’s teens face unprecedented levels of pressure, facing both new stresses like social media and age-old problems like exam stress and puberty. However, a new book aims to help teenagers by showing them how to use a simple yet successful business strategy to navigate the tsunami of distractions life throws at them, helping them feel in control by being organised.

Getting Things Done for Teens outlines a common-sense way of identifying goals and projects and coping with the complexities of day-to-day life through a simple five-step system of written lists and mapping, plus instructions on how to clearly focus on achieving both small and large goals in an orderly fashion.

One of the book’s authors, David Allen, says Getting Things Done, or GTD, is a way of learning to become focused and engaged with the present, being aware of what’s next, and finding stability when things feel out of control.

“What can you do to take control of your life in a distracting world?” he asks. “These timeless productivity tips can be used to reduce stress, increase self-confidence, and get things done in school and life.”

**THE FIVE STEPS**

DAVID, who wrote this book with Mike Williams and Mark Wallace, after first writing the Getting Things Done work life management system book, says the initial five steps of GTD can be done alone by a teenager, or together with a parent. All you need is paper, a pen and 15 minutes.

**STEP 1: CAPTURE**

At least once a day, write down on a piece of paper the stuff on your mind that has your attention. The authors call this a mindsweep. Set a timer for five minutes and see how much stuff you can capture.

**STEP 2: CLARIFY**

THE clarify process takes one item on the paper at a time. Teenagers need to decide whether it’s actionable, and if so, write down the very next action on an action list. Complete this for every item captured on the mindsweep list.

“We also like to call this the transformer tool, as it transforms stuff into actionable or non-actionable items,” says David, who points out it may take about 10 minutes to clarify all your ‘stuff’.

**STEP 3: ORGANISE**

FIND a trusted place to store the action list you’ve just created. It can be a paper list or a digital list on your phone or computer so that you can refer to it when needed.

**STEP 4: REFLECT**

LOOK back at all the actions on your action list. Reflect for a few moments and then select an action that needs your attention first. Circle it.

**STEP 5: ENGAGE**

COMPLETE the action you have identified. Repeat the process for the rest of your life. “The Five Steps is a starting point for the GTD journey,” says David.

**LEVELS OF FOCUS**

AFTER gaining control through the five steps, the authors say teenagers need to look at their six levels of focus, which are: Purpose: Teenagers need to write down why they’re here, and this

**HOW TO KEEP TEENS ON TRACK**

A five-step technique from the world of business could be key to unlocking potential, says **LISA SALMON**

**Childhood squabbles form a normal part of return to school**

- Parenting column by Sasha Hart, family care manager at Community Family Care, Staunton

YOUR child has hopefully settled in after heading back to school.

They were no doubt excited to see friends and have possibly made new ones. But you may have had the dreaded playground squabble and are not quite sure how to deal with the fallout.

If the other child’s parents confront you it is sensible to suggest ‘let’s leave it to the parents.

It’s also important to encourage children to problem solve for themselves to build their resilience.

Confronting the other child isn’t fair or appropriate and your child will probably find it embarrassing.

**Parental instincts might urge you to**

building their resilience.

Many parents struggle to accept their children to problem solve for themselves to develop independence.

Proceed with caution with the other parents.

Many parents struggle to accept their offspring have done anything wrong.

The children are likely to make up before the week is out which will potentially leave an awkward feud between the parents.

If the other child’s parents confront you it is sensible to suggest ‘let’s leave the children to sort it out’ or similar.

If you feel the incident was serious and the school needs to get involved, perhaps say that you would rather the school dealt with it.

When to speak to the teacher...

If the dispute involved physical violence, becomes persistent, and/or your child doesn’t want to go to school or is having trouble sleeping, then it’s time to raise it with their teacher.

They can then keep a closer eye on the children, intervening if necessary.

- Community Family Care, based at Staunton, Gloucestershire helps families, children and young people in need of additional support communityfamilycare.co.uk

How can I ensure my kids understand the dangers of playing on railways?

**Ask the Expert**

**Ryan Ackerman, Network Rail community safety manager, says:** “If there’s one piece of advice you should give to your children, it’s that the railway is full of both obvious and hidden dangers, so the only way to make sure they stay completely safe is to stay off the track: 25,000 volts of electricity is the most dangerous factor in stepping on the tracks. Children shouldn’t be scared to use the railway but they do need to understand that if they’re on the tracks, they’re on dangerous ground.

“Research by Network Rail and the British Transport Police found that, worryingly, more than a quarter of teenagers confess to behaving in a way that could endanger their life on the railway. The number of young people taking risks on the railway track has gone up by almost 80% in the last five years – and in the last 12 months alone, seven young people under the age of 18 have lost their lives and a further 48 people have received life-changing injuries.

“The research also shows children are unaware of the dangers posed when going on the railway.”

Electricity is easily the most dangerous factor in stepping on the track: 25,000 volts of...”