



Teen years often the toughest



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Your teenager is most vulnerable to negative forces in society. While asking him or herself, "Who am I?" any lack of concern demonstrated by parents will surely suggest to the teenager that life may be better across town; when your child starts eating over his friends house more often than home, your thinking cap must go on.

The age of teens is also the age of battle. Our kids go to war. They draft themselves. They take up the fight of trying to survive independently knowing full well that they cannot divorce themselves from the dependency upon their parents.

And with all that has been written here, your child presents different symptoms of wanting to be an adult. My Elizabeth is going on 12 and she marvels at the fact that she can fit into my wife's shoes, can buy certain types of makeup, can help with the caring of our baby and freely talk about the boy in her life today; not the same boy in her life tomorrow or even the next day. The generation gap does surface, however. She takes offense that I cannot tolerate

the use of her jargon and idiosyncratic language that only she and maybe a handful of her classmates understand. It's her independence though. I had mine. Not too many years ago, "Grease" was all I wanted to know.

Society's cycle

Our children may have problems and situations that appear to be unique, but under the cosmetic effect of our time, they are the same as any other period of time, possessing the basic ingredients of life.

Give your young adult an opportunity to be his or her own person - as painful as we are all finding it. Be sure also to make yourself available if help is needed. Don't be afraid to speak about how you grew up and the problems you had. And equally so, don't be hesitant to provide flexibility within the framework of consistency, respect and love.

Do you know the crisis points in the development of a child? They are as follows:

- Birth
- Entering school
- Puberty/the teens,
- Marriage
- Death of parents and/or serious illness.

As parents, we must always be sensitive to the peaks and valleys of our children's emotional and physical growth. This sensitivity includes preparing for the crisis

points. If we understand the naturalness of changes in growing up, we will conduct ourselves with the type of confidence that will ease our children's anxiety. For this column, attention goes to the teenager.

The olden days

Oh, if we were only a primitive society. The whole mess of adolescence would be dealt with so theatrically and ceremonially that a child could jump from being a kid to an adult in virtually no time at all. Quite obviously, the primitive tribe people needed young adults to provide for the well being of the community.

In today's society, however, the mess must be endured as a transitional stage—an internship, to learn, refine and cultivate skills needed for an adult life in a highly technical and information-explosive world. On the opposite side of the coin, we can afford to allow our kids to slowly grow up and really enjoy themselves. We often tell them, "Don't rush time, enjoy your life, you'll be grown up soon enough and have to go to work."

Give 'em a listen

Yes, our kids want to be young adults but, really, they want more than anything else to be accepted as they are. They want to be heard and have some positive input into social welfare programs and the corpus of their community. They also want to show that they are different and independent by their clothes. They want not to compromise their idealism for justice. Those that find themselves hampered because of insensitive parents will turn to drugs and alcohol to escape reality and continue their ideas in a dream state.