

What They Say About Their Dads' SMOKING

We've interviewed these children from the Camelot Montessori School in United Parañaque Subdivision in Sucat, Parañaque, Metro Manila. Mrs. Irma Rodriguez, the school's amiable head director, gathered these kids for us to interview.

We asked the first 4 kids what they think of their dads' smoking. Sandy preferred to comment on people's smoking on a recent party they had. We asked Victor John if he would smoke if he were given a cigaret.

Although these children answered negatively about their parents' smoking, they really weren't sure whether it was bad. On their faces we saw they were confused about its rightness or wrongness. Try asking a kid whose parent smokes. —*Evangelina C. Rubio*



Sandy Vicente

Victor John Bognot

April Jo Casio

Joel Banis

Joseph Alfred Casio

Marela Lucero

Sandy Vicente, age 5

Pag may party, tulad noong may blessing, maraming nangariyo. May lalagan naman kasi ng sigarilyo. (When there was a party, just like when there was a "blessing," many people smoked. There was an ash tray, that's why.)

Victor John Bognot, age 5

Hindi. Malit pa kasi ako. (No, I'm still small.)

April Jo Casio, age 6

Ayaw ko lang. (I just don't like it.)

Joel Banis, age 4

Hindi mabango ang usok. (The smoke doesn't smell good.)

Joseph Alfred Casio, age 7

Mukhang ayaw ko. Lagi ako nauubo dahil natatamaan ako ng usok. (It seems I don't like it. I often cough due to the smoke.)

Marela Lucero, age 4

Babae kasi ako, ayaw ko. Sa lalaki puwede. (I'm a girl, I don't like it. With boys, it's okay.)



Living With Your Teen

By Roger L. Dudley

Why do teenagers tend to reject the values of their parents and other authority figures?

The day our daughter turned 13, I teased her playfully.

"Cheryl, how will I ever survive having a teenager in the house?"

A loving, considerate young lady, she replied with all seriousness, "Oh, don't worry,

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Daddy. I won't change."

Now it was my turn to be serious. "Ah, Cheryl," I said, "but you will." And of course, she did change.

Why do teenagers often seem to undergo personality alteration?

More specifically, why do they tend to reject the values of their parents and other authority figures? Why are they likely to become indifferent to, or alienated from, the religion of their childhood? What makes Tommy and Tammy tick?

Of course, not all teenagers experience rebellion to the same extent. Some seem to sail through adolescence smoothly. Others exhibit mild nonconformity. And a certain percentage "go off the deep

end." Some youth, after a few years of disaffection, appear to have passed the crisis and settle back into a lifestyle resembling that of their parents. Others permanently reject parental values. Psychologist David Ausubel labels this experience "adolescent heredity." How can we understand it? And how can we deal with it?

It would be overly simplistic to look for the cause of these changes. The roots of human behavior are varied and complex. Yet it is possible to weave together a number of strands from the adolescent experience and discern a pattern that helps to explain why such rebellion is not at all abnormal or unreasonable—it is perhaps even

likely. We begin by examining the concept of "developmental tasks."

Experts in the field of human development have often divided the life span into a series of stages. Each stage has its own particular questions, challenges, crises—and tasks to be accomplished. The mastery of these tasks, or at least partial mastery, is necessary for completion of that specific stage and for preparing the individual to cope with the next step in his or her overall growth.

The term *developmental tasks* suggests that certain behaviors are programmed into our maturing processes so that we naturally begin to engage in them when our built-in biological-psychological time clocks toll the destined hour. For example, among the tasks of infancy and early childhood are learning to walk and talk.

Proud mothers and fathers love to urge their little toddler to take that first momentous step while standing between them. I can still remember the joy that initial small journey brought to the heart of this dad. But it's not at all necessary to provide "walking lessons" for tiny tots. When the right time comes, they begin to crawl, then pull themselves up, then move about by clinging to the furniture, then finally walk alone.

Imagine going to a home to visit and finding a 12-year-old boy crawling on the floor. "What are you doing down there?" you inquire.

"Well, my mom and dad were very busy when I was small," he replies, "and they never found time to teach me how to walk."

That would never happen, of course, because instinct says "walk," and the child responds. Of course, some children never learn to walk, but in those cases we know that their development hasn't been normal.

The challenge of parenting is to help teenagers find acceptable ways to express their independence so they won't succumb to pressure to express it in harmful ways.

Two of the tasks appropriate to the teenage period are (1) gaining emotional independence from parents and other adults and (2) achieving assurance of economic independence. Closely related to these is the search for a separate, personal identity. Perhaps the basic question of adolescence is *Who am I?*

Up to this point the child has been dependent largely upon his or her parents for major decisions in life, for emotional support, for the fulfillment of his or her basic needs—indeed, for survival itself. But the teenager will soon be an adult. He or she must learn to make the decisions, embark on a life career, choose values for living—in short, become a separate person.

In the stage of early childhood it's difficult to prevent children from attempting to walk and talk when their "inner calendar" indicates the time has arrived. Likewise, it's difficult to fight "nature" and suppress the drive toward independence, self-identity, and personal-value choices that occur in adolescence. The internal pressure to move from childhood into adulthood is great and not to be denied.

Just as some children don't learn to walk and talk, some teenagers never gain real independence or develop a personal value system. In both cases abnormal development has occurred. Though we fear the various changes that adolescence

may bring, we must be thankful for the concept of change, because that is the only way a child can turn into a fully functioning adult.

Achieving Independence is, however, a gradual process. In this shadowy period of life the teenager is sometimes the dependent child, sometimes the self-sufficient adult. Life in modern, technological societies has made the transition more stressful than it used to be. In simpler cultures young people could be socialized largely by their own parents in their own homes. Boys learned adult male roles (usually the skills of a farmer or artisan) through working with their fathers. Girls acquired adult female roles (mostly homemaking skills) from their mothers. By the time of puberty the young person was often ready to assume his or her place in adult society. The teenager had a sense of responsibility and career certainty that resulted in feelings of independence and sureness of identity.

Today, becoming an adult isn't so simple. While children are reaching puberty and physical maturity at increasingly earlier ages, the expanding career options, the need for higher education, and the challenge to learn ever-more-complex adult roles have pushed economic and psychological maturity far into the future—sometimes into the mid or late 20s. As a result, the long transition period between beginning to grow up and reaching complete adulthood causes strain and makes it difficult for the teenager to find his or her identity.

Rejection of parental values.

What we have on our hands is a physically and sexually mature teenager driven by God-implanted forces to become a responsible, independent adult.

The proper time for this step in the scheme of human development has arrived. But in most cases, this individual simply cannot yet assume the responsibilities of adulthood because of lack of emotional maturity and dependence upon parents for financial or educational support. The teenager is just not ready to "cut the apron strings."

Caught in the struggle between nature and the realities of society, what can the adolescent do? Unable as yet to set up a home or embark upon a career, the teenager often subconsciously seeks to make some other statement of independence. This statement may often involve putting psychological distance between personal and parental values. This rejection of the values of the home may be the teenager's way of saying "See, I'm not the same as you. I'm a different, separate person. I can choose my own way of life."

This separation tendency characterizes many teenage behaviors. Some of the results are relatively harmless and shouldn't cause too much alarm—hair length, style of dress, teenage jargon, for example. Other behaviors are potentially self-destructive—such as alcohol, drugs, premarital sex, etc. The challenge of parenting is to help teenagers find acceptable ways to express their independence so they won't succumb to pressures to express it in harmful ways.

The teenager's attempt to make a statement of independence may be necessary to discover and preserve a sense of self-identity, but it can also be very frightening. To step out into the complex world alone without the familiar support of mother and father is a scary experience. In search of some reassurance for the new journey, the teenager often turns to a peer group for approval. Ironically,



this may lead to a dependence and conformity as strong as that which the teenager is trying to escape at home. . . .

It's probably not reasonable to expect most teenagers to take positions radically different from those of their friends. This is why a Christian environment is so important for youth during these formative years. And perhaps the support of peers forms a useful halfway station on the journey from childhood to adulthood. Having made the passage successfully and settled the identity questions, the young adult's need for peer approval diminishes.

Adolescents' need for independence doesn't necessarily mean that young people will reject the religion of their parents or that youth are not interested

in values. On the contrary, studies have found that religious values are significant to a large majority of evangelical teenagers and that most of them believe the doctrines common to evangelical churches.

Principles must be thought through and internalized. If parental values are retained, as they may well be, it will be because they have become the teenager's own values. If youth are forced to choose between independence and self-identity on the one hand and values on the other, values are usually jettisoned in the effort to maintain individuality.

Suggestions for prevention and healing. What can parents do to prevent the growing spirit of independence in the

adolescent from leading to the rejection of priceless values? How can adults reach out to heal breaches that have already occurred between them and their teens in the sphere of religion? Here are several possible answers:

1. *Try to see things through your teenager's eyes.* Listen carefully to your teenager, talk things over, work out solutions to problems in ways that allow him or her to be a partner in the family enterprise. All of these practices show respect and make your teen feel more grown up and, thus, more open to parental values. When adolescents realize that their parents aren't trying to thwart their independence, but are struggling to see things through their eyes, much of the pressure to reject parental values is removed.

2. *Work with, not against, your teenager in the achievement of independence.* Many parents feel threatened when their teenager begins to signal his desire for more self-direction. They tighten restraints because they fear they may lose control. The teenager reacts by pulling away even more vigorously in an effort to gain the separateness he unconsciously seeks. The parents clamp down harder. Trust disappears and parent-child relationships are ruined.

By contrast, wise parents plan ahead for increasing independence. They look for areas in which they can allow the teen to make decisions; they encourage self-sufficiency. These prudent moms and dads rejoice to see their sons and daughters learning how to get along without them.

3. *Give responsibility and hold responsible.* Because urban life and modern technology have rendered many traditional chores obsolete, it may be difficult to find meaningful responsibilities for today's young people, but

take the time to do so. The teenager who knows that he or she is handling a significant adult task and is really important to family, community, or church feels grown up. The need to make a rebellious statement of independence disappears.

4. *Help your teenager develop his or her own set of values.* Adults have a tendency to try to transmit their fully formed values to their children—a list of do's and don'ts, rights and wrongs. To adults it makes sense to share the wisdom gleaned from their years of experience, but no one can use another's value system and still be an independent, principled human being. Wise parents lead their children in an examination of every belief, guide them in discovering the principles that undergird conviction and behavior, and encourage them to make their own choices on the basis of the evidence.

5. *Allow some unwise decisions.* People learn to make good decisions by making some poor ones and reaping the consequences. Wise parents know that they can prepare their young people for independent adulthood only by giving them room to test their judgment and by allowing for occasional failure. To be overly protective is to deny growth toward independence and self-identity.

6. *Let your own life show the worth of religion.* Teenagers will select their own values—if not today, then tomorrow. They might very well choose those spiritual values that their parents have found so precious and meaningful, provided they find that *that* system leads to the happiest, most effective, most fulfilling life possible. No one can force his or her values on another, but one can provide a living demonstration that they are superior to all other alternatives. ■

THE WISE SAY . . .

Some are atheists only in fair weather. —Thomas Fuller

Patience is a remedy for every sorrow.

It is not possible for civilization to flow backwards while there is youth in the world. —Helen Keller

It is well that war is so terrible—we shouldn't grow too fond of it. —Robert E. Lee

A reputation once broken may possibly be repaired, but the world will always keep their eyes on the spot where the crack was. —Joseph Hall

Wise men searched for the Child Jesus long ago, and wise men are still searching for Him today. —Phil Rosburg

Thinking carefully about your duty is one thing. But thinking about it or explaining it away is another thing, and a very dangerous one for a Christian.

The more you speak of yourself, the more you are likely to lie. —Zimmerman

The more anyone speaks of himself, the less he likes to hear another talked of. —Lauter

A man of fifty is responsible for his face. —Stanton

I hate to see things done by halves. If it be right, do it boldly—if it be wrong, leave it undone. —Filipin

There is not one wise man in twenty that will praise himself. —Shakespeare

The test of a vocation is the love of the drudgery it involves. —L. P. Smith



Your Own Declaration of Independence

What is independence? When should you have it? What freedoms do you already have? Will you ever be totally free? These are questions to ponder during the teen years—and beyond.

Webster says freedom is "the absence of constraint in choice or action." In other-words, freedom means no restrictions. He also says that being free is "enjoying personal freedom, not subject to the control of another." Can you think of anyone who, according to these definitions, is totally

free? No restraints at all? It's hard to imagine.

People around the world find their actions restricted. They must comply with laws on world travel, highway speeds, behavior in public places, and the rights of others. Yet I'm sure you'd agree that some of these rules are necessary. With no rules at all our lives would be constantly endangered by people who would be free to torture, steal, and kill.

Yet we say certain countries are "free." What do we mean?

We mean that within reasonable limits people there may choose their own destiny, do what they want to do. Their freedoms are limited only by the rights of others. They are free to shoot—but not at people. They are free to drink—but not to endanger others by driving drunk. When their freedom endangers others' rights, freedom ends.

Rules, Rules, Rules

Rules exist for many reasons—to protect the rights of others, to guarantee our safety, to promote