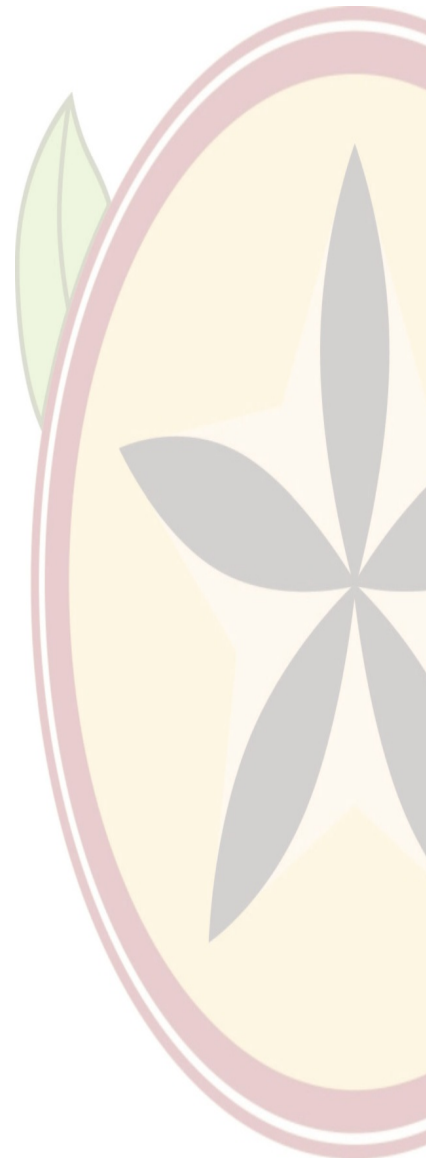


Unofficial Rules of Adolescence

A Workbook for
Parents and Teens on Surviving
the Culture of Adolescence

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Introduction to the Unofficial Rules of Adolescence

The Unofficial Rules of Adolescence workbook represents an effort to promote dialogue between parents and teens by describing the unwritten, unspoken, implicit “laws” that teens in America must cope with in order to survive adolescence. This is not a list of ten “Commandments” that must be slavishly adhered to, but rather a list of the challenges that teens must confront as they mature from child to adult. These requirements of adolescence are not implicitly good or bad, but represent expectations of their peers and their society that can be coped with in healthy or unhealthy ways. Articulating the Unofficial Rules may help guide parents and teens toward healthy coping.

Experts have long listed the “tasks of adolescence” but in doing so often fail to frame them in a way that teens—and for that matter parents of teens—can relate to and benefit from. Study of adolescent behavior has been described as “adultist” focusing on what matters to adults, not what matters to kids. If one were to take those vaunted tasks of adolescence and toss them in a blender with popular American culture, what you would pour out of the pitcher might look very much like the Unofficial Rules of Adolescence. While the developmental tasks of adolescence represent adult expectations of adolescence, the Unofficial Rules of Adolescence represent teen expectations of each other.

We are all experts on adolescence. “Experiential experts” because we have all personally experienced—or are experiencing—being or raising teenagers ourselves. We are all ignorant about adolescence, because these years are experienced differently by everyone. The Unofficial Rules of Adolescence are intended to help teens and their parents better understand the pressure teens face to conform with the popular culture stereotype of what an American adolescent is and to have a language to communicate about this pressure. Naming the Unofficial Rules is intended to deepen understanding and initiate dialogue about what it is to be an adolescent in America in the 21st century.

Introduction to the Unofficial Rules of Adolescence

The Unofficial Rules of Adolescence assume that there is such thing as a culture of adolescence and that this adolescent culture has resonance across time, individual differences, and circumstances. Culture can be understood as shared activity and shared meaning. While there is no single adolescent culture, it is reasonable to speak of a dominant adolescent culture that influences the micro-cultures that relate to it. Though activities and meanings evolve over time and across peoples, the basic requirements of adolescent culture have commonalities among different ethnicities and across generations.

The pressures experienced during adolescence were different for parents of the current cohort of teens than they are for our children. But were the rules really different? As adolescents in the 1960's and 1970's, we still had to fit in; we tried out (in fact more than our children do); we tried on different identities; we still wanted—even needed—to look good; we certainly tried to get over, though we didn't label it as such; we sought to get ours, to obtain what we were due from our society; we certainly were concerned about getting some; and about getting out. So, clearly, were our own parents when they were adolescents. It is not so much that the rules have changed, but that the context in which we cope with them, interpret them and respond to them has evolved. There remain shared activities and meanings across generational cohorts of teens that retain resonance as we seek to identify commonalities rather than differences.

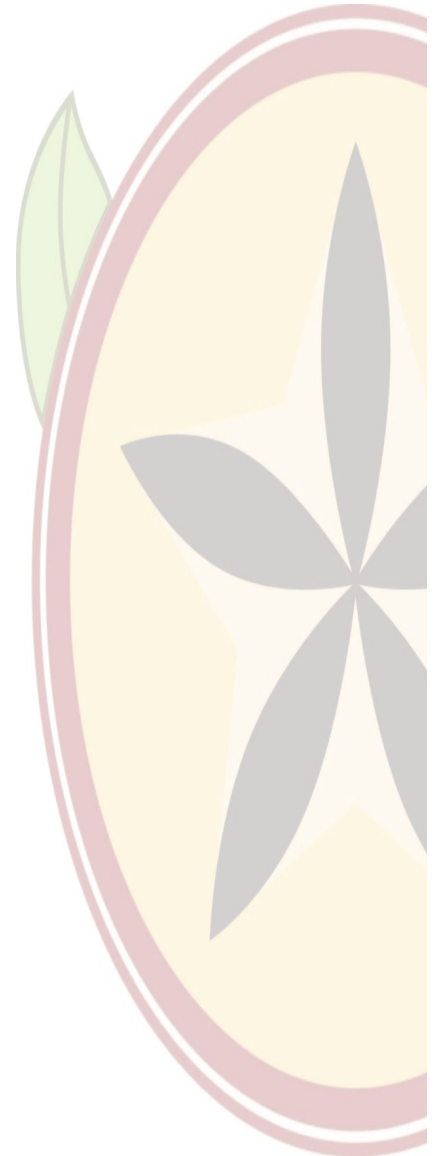
In the same manner, the pressures felt today are different for an urban minority teen from a financially disadvantaged family than for an upper middle class teen of any ethnicity. The pressures are different for boys and girls; for short and tall; athletic and intellectual; popular and ostracized. But the rules are the same, with shared activities and shared meaning that require attention in order to cope. Within this shared experience there is opportunity to recognize the ways that we are alike and the ways that we can grow together, as people and as a society.

The Unofficial Rules of Adolescence

These are the rules. They must be followed or coped with. There are consequences if they are ignored. More details will follow.

1. **Fitting In**
2. **Trying Out**
3. **Trying On**
4. **Looking Good**
5. **Getting Over**
6. **Getting Mine**
7. **Getting Some**
8. **Getting Out**

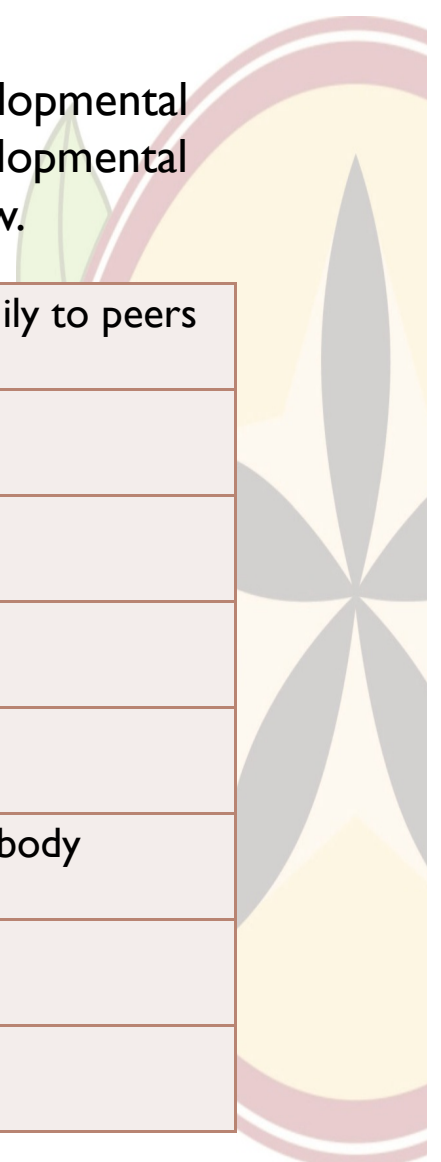
*Rules teens must cope with to survive adolescence



The Unofficial Rules and Developmental Tasks of Adolescence

There are many different formulations of developmental tasks of adolescence. The relationship of developmental tasks to the Unofficial Rules is described below.

Fitting In	Shift of primary affiliation from family to peers
Trying Out	Exploring limits and boundaries
Trying On	Development of identity
Looking Good	Attaining social acceptability
Getting Over	Development of autonomy
Getting Some	Adjusting to maturing feelings and body
Getting Mine	Exploring fit in society
Getting Out	Becoming independent



A Word about the Unofficial Rules of Parenting Adolescents

A spacey looking young adult sitting in the third row of a large, otherwise empty auditorium. A large banner stretches across the rear of the room stating, “Adult Children of Normal Parents Annual Convention”. That is not me sitting in the third row. Chances are that it is not you either—or at least it wasn’t when you were a young adult. While adolescents and young adults, we all interpret the actions and decisions of our parents through the lens of our own deluded, hormonally muddled, explosively changing adolescent brains.

Just as the Unofficial Rules of Adolescence help parents understand teen life, the companion Unofficial Rules of Parenting Adolescents, are intended to provide a framework for raising teens during the era of mixed messages that we live in. For every time a parent encourages healthy behavior in their children, we are contradicted by another movie; another billboard; another song; another commercial; another corporate marketing strategy; another misbehaving celebrity; another uninformed parent; another pressuring peer; another website; another text message; another social networking page.

The pressures that millennial teens face are entirely different than any previous generation. This has, in fact, been true at some level for every generation of teens, and each generation has found its own way to announce to doubting, concerned parents that everything is different now. Perhaps, we might all agree, more different now than ever. There are simply more toys, more mixed messages, more lifelong consequences, more ways to screw up than ever before. It is hoped that the Unofficial Rules can allow parents to effectively cope with their teens coping with the emotional, cultural and physical demands of adolescence, while maintaining balance on the tight rope that is parenting.

About Our Logo

Our logo you represents the “Apple Star”. When you slice an apple it horizontally, at the core you will see a perfect star constructed of apple seeds. The apple symbolizes health. Our hope is to plant these seeds of health and nurture their growth. At the center of each of us, at our core, there is a star. Sometimes that star only reveals itself when we slice things differently.

Reluctant Concessions for Parents

There are reluctant concessions for every parent to consider. It doesn't hurt if teens understand these concessions as well, and just how difficult it is for parents to make them.

- ✿ **It is incumbent upon every generation to choose its own mistakes.**
 - It is deluded, unproductive, and unrewarding to assume that our children will learn from our mistakes.
 - It is therefore necessary as parents to endeavor to help them avoid—or in the alternative, learn—from their missteps.
- ✿ **Intelligence, understanding and insight are no sure barrier to making bad decisions.**
 - There is little more difficult as a parent than being expected to console or rescue a teen from consequences resulting from a decision you advised against in the first place.
- ✿ **Parents are not always right.**
 - Not always wrong, either.
- ✿ **Mistakes will remain part of the adolescent experience regardless of parental effort intended to protect our children from them.**
 - We can do everything “right” and still have problems.
 - We can do everything wrong and still have things turn out “right”.
 - On average, the more we guide with firm strength, values and purpose, the better the odds are that our children will grow up safe and healthy.
- ✿ **Some mistakes we pay for more than others.**
 - The most difficult uncertainty of parenting is the mistake that we make as parents, or that our child makes despite or because of our parenting that results in lifelong consequences.

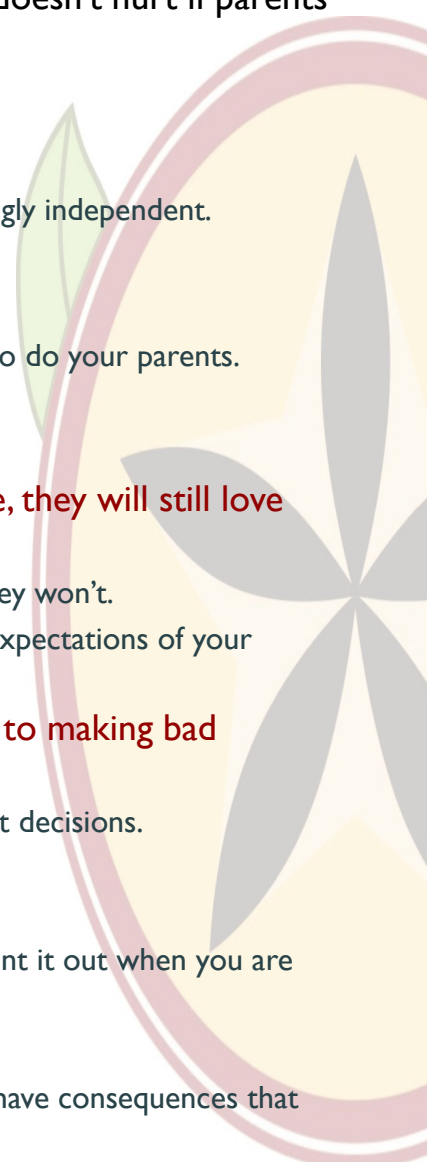
“Children are foreigners. We treat them as such.”

-Ralph Waldo Emerson

Reluctant Concessions for Teens

There are reluctant concessions for every teen to consider. It doesn't hurt if parents understand these concessions as well.

- ✿ **You don't like to be treated like a child.**
 - Even though you actually are.
 - It is hard to feel dependent as your mind is growing increasingly independent.
- ✿ **You hate it when your parents are right.**
 - Especially when that means you're wrong.
 - In fact, sometimes you disagree just to disagree. That's OK. So do your parents.
 - True, your parents are not always right. Neither are you.
 - Your parents are right more often than you care to admit.
- ✿ **If you disappoint or behave in ways your parents don't like, they will still love you.**
 - If you disappoint or behave in ways your friends don't like, they won't.
 - This is largely why you are more likely to go along with the expectations of your friends than of your parents.
- ✿ **Intelligence, understanding and insight are no sure barrier to making bad decisions.**
 - You may be smart. That doesn't mean you always make smart decisions.
 - You don't like to have your judgment questioned.
 - You don't like it pointed out when you're wrong.
 - You need your parents to question your judgment and to point it out when you are wrong.
- ✿ **Some mistakes we pay for more than others**
 - The mistakes made during the teen years are more likely to have consequences that will stay with you through life.



A Few Words on The Adolescent Brain

At one point, medical scientists believed that brain growth effectively stopped around the age of 6 years old. Recent advances in technology have opened up a whole new understanding of the adolescent brain. Brain imaging technology has advanced to reveal detail about teen brain growth and function not before appreciated. This research reveals striking changes in brain function that occur during adolescence and that help understand many of the behavioral issues common to adolescents. It is important to remember, however, that brain development, just like hormonal development of the teen body, occurs at different rates and to a different extent in different teens.

Teens are not doomed to be victims of their changing brains. Just as they can influence the physical development through the way they eat and exercise, they can influence their brain development in the way they exercise their minds. Changes in the teen brain should not be used as a rationale or excuse for bad teen behavior, but rather as cautionary insight into the struggles teens face; how we can help them; and more importantly, how they can help themselves.

Of key importance among these research findings is the frightening impact of alcohol and drugs on the developing brain and the ability of teens to learn. These findings not only cause us concern about alcohol use in middle school and high school adolescents, but also in “older teens” or young adults, particularly college students who tend to drink more than their peers, and who are supposed to be learning.

It is interesting to note that there are two periods of time in life when the brain is rapidly developing and when the chaos created by the changing neurochemicals in the brain may create dominant patterns of behavior with some spooky similarities. That is the teen years and the so-called *terrible two's*.

The Teen Brain and the Terrible Two's

- ✪ On the “Terrible Two’s”: All two-year olds are different, but there are prominent patterns of behavior that are based on the nature of their changing brains and on the developmental tasks consistently confronted in this age group.
 - Two-year-olds are opinionated.
 - Two-year-olds are stubborn, resistive, and obstinate.
 - Two-year-old feelings are raw and powerful.
 - Two-year-olds have flawed reasoning.
 - You cannot argue with a two-year-old.
 - Two-year-old negativism is neither rational nor a personal attack.
 - Two-year-olds are slaves to their moods.
 - Two-year-olds have nothing better to do.
 - Two-year-old use no-saying as a way of asserting their will over the wishes of their parents.
 - Two-year-old oppositionality heralds the onset of independence.
 - The Two-year-old wants to “do it by myself” but feels the accompanying frustration in the face of personal and parental limitations.
 - Two-year-olds are searching for a sense of autonomy and personal identity.
- ✪ Viewed from an adult vantage point, teens may share each of these traits. If you were to insert the word “teen” where the words “two-year old” current reside, many parents and adolescent experts would have never know that it originally described two-year olds.
- ✪ Viewed from an adolescent point of view, there may be a very different kind of “Terrible Too’s”
 - “No, that costs TOO much money!”
 - “That’s TOO loud, turn down the music.”
 - “Those pants are TOO loose on you, pull them up!”
 - “That skirt is TOO tight to be wearing to school!”
 - “You spend TOO much time on the phone!”
 - “Don’t you think that’s TOO much makeup?”
 - “No, that’s TOO late to stay up on a school night!”
 - “TOO bad, that’s the rules, no TV before your homework is finished!”
 - “Is it TOO much to ask you to clean your own room once in a while?”

The Teen Brain and the Terrible Two's



What to do for the Terrible Two's/Too's: These recommendations may have an eerie familiarity.

- Make predictable routines part of your toddler's (teen's) day.
- Give regular healthy snacks to keep blood sugar steady.
- Avoid putting yourself in situations where you need to use the word "no".
- Choose your battles. Say, "yes" when you can (when it is healthy).
- Don't wait until your child is in full meltdown mode.
- Nothing distracts like distraction. Shift attention to another activity or toy.
- Be consistent.
- Catch your child doing something right instead of something wrong. This helps escape what may seem like constant battles or criticism.
- Offer your toddler (teen) limited choices, two or three options, each of which is acceptable to you (for example, "Do you want apple juice or orange juice in your sippy cup?").
- Set limits (but expect to be tested).
- **Provide a safe, (teen) toddler-proofed environment.**

Fitting In:

Finding a group in which you feel accepted, included, valued

🌟 Key Points about Fitting In

- *Fitting In* is the most important rule of adolescence.
- Describes the simple, natural need to belong.
- At some level, all other rules of adolescence relate back to this imperative.
- Maintaining social bonds (fitting in) has been described as the “most crucial human motivation.”
- Fitting in for teens is driven by a shift from primary affiliation with family to primary affiliation with peers.
- While the human brain is “hard wired” to fit in, the developing teen brain alters the perception of fitting in means.
- Mixed messages from the adult world further complicate the process and perception of *Fitting In*.
- The cost of *Fitting In* is conformism, creating a tension between personal autonomy and relatedness within social groups.
- *Fitting In* is often more about fear of ridicule or rejection if you don't conform than any desire to be or act like peers.
- Decisions that are motivated by the need to *Fit In* are often not recognized as such. No one likes to admit they are influenced by peer pressure.

Healthy and Unhealthy Ways of Fitting In

✪ Healthy

- Sports
- After school activities or clubs
- Be yourself
- Be smart
- Music
- Shared interests
- Stick with old friends
- Humor
- Clothes
- Church
- Be nice/kind
- Be aware of popular culture
- Hold onto your values
- Smile a lot

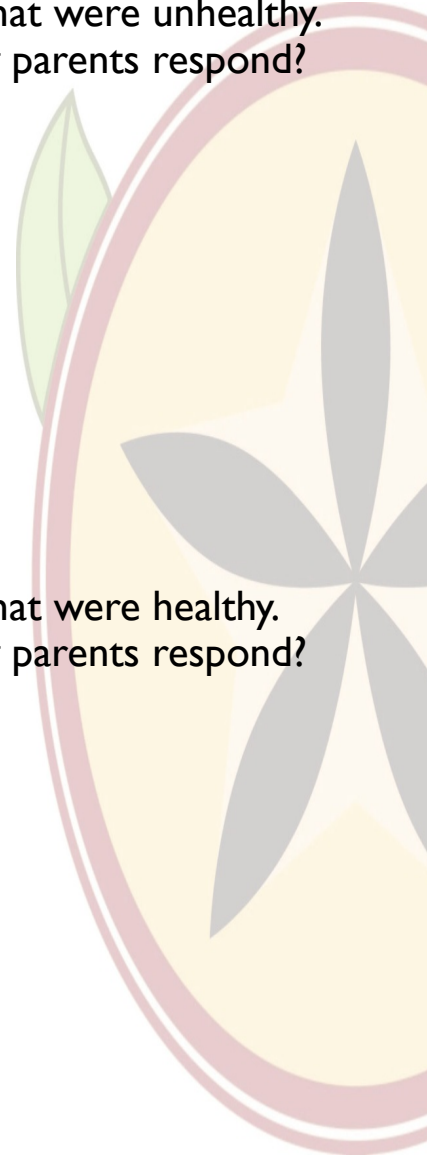
✪ Unhealthy

- Alcohol
- Tobacco
- Drugs
- Sex
- Hiding that you are smart
- Bullying/fighting
- Changing yourself to be like others
- Clothes
- Gossiping, spreading rumors
- Putting other people down
- Being noisy and disruptive
- Gangs

Fitting In: An Exercise for Parents

List 3 things you did to fit in when you were a teen that were unhealthy.
How did that choice work out for you? How did *your* parents respond?
How did *that* work out for you?

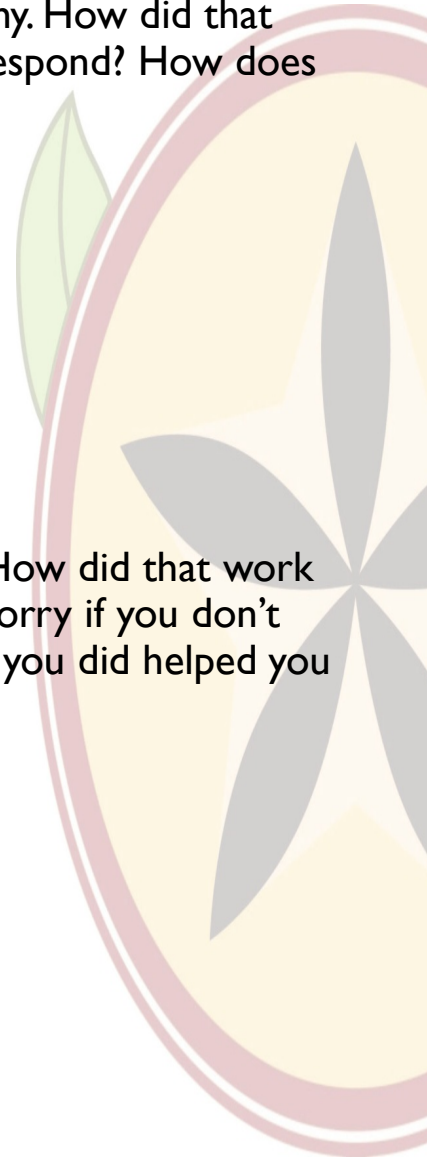
List 3 things you did to fit in when you were a teen that were healthy.
How did that choice work out for you? How did *your* parents respond?
How did *that* work out for you?



Fitting In: An Exercise for Teens

List 3 things you see kids do to fit in that are unhealthy. How did that seem to work out for them? How do their parents respond? How does *that* work out for them?

List 3 things you have done to fit in that are healthy. How did that work out for you? How do your parents respond? Don't worry if you don't feel like you did those things just to fit in. If whatever you did helped you find friends, list it here.



Trying Out

Testing boundaries through new experiences

✪ Key Points about Trying Out

- A primary motivation for human behavior is a desire to maintain a sense of personal control.
- For many teens trying out is about asserting personal control
- Trying out is a necessary part of adolescence
- Though trying out is necessary, it doesn't need to be dangerous
- Healthy exploration beats hazardous experimentation
- Encouraging safe testing of boundaries may make it easier for teens to avoid unhealthy experimentation
- Trying out is also about a developing sense of independence and competence
- Be aware of culturally sanctioned risk taking in order to guide teen choices
- Avoid risks that don't involve development of skills over time, adult risks during adolescence, and risks that are inevitably unhealthy
- Encourage risk that involves the capacity to increase skills, confidence and competence

Culturally Sanctioned "Trying Out"

⚠️ Novelty or Sensation Seeking Behavior

- High speed driving
- Horror movies
- Sports
- "Extreme sports"
- Music
- Violent
- Video games

⚠️ Oppositional behavior

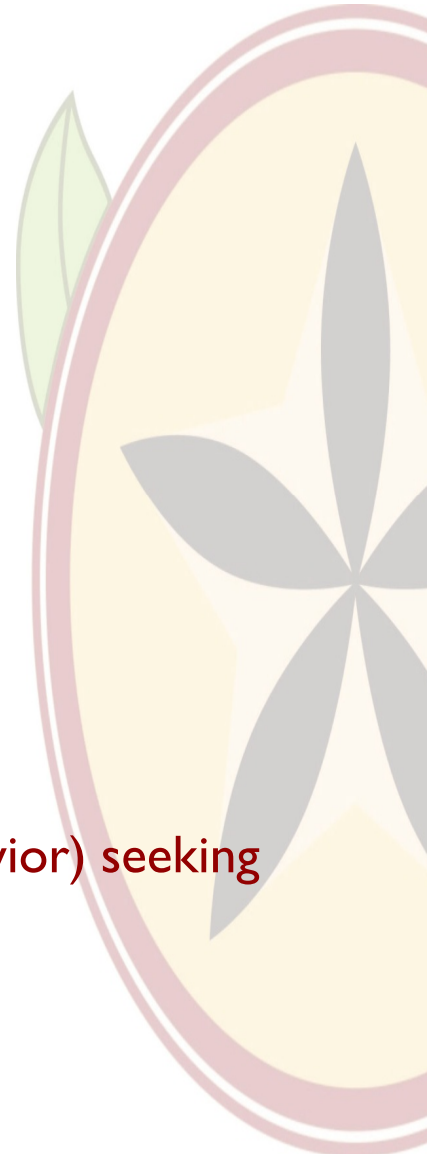
- Disobedience
- Resisting authority
- Lying
- Raging
- Violence

⚠️ Provocative behavior

- Eating disorders
- Self mutilation

⚠️ Euphoria (may become avoidance behavior) seeking behavior

- Tobacco
- Alcohol
- Other drugs
- Sex

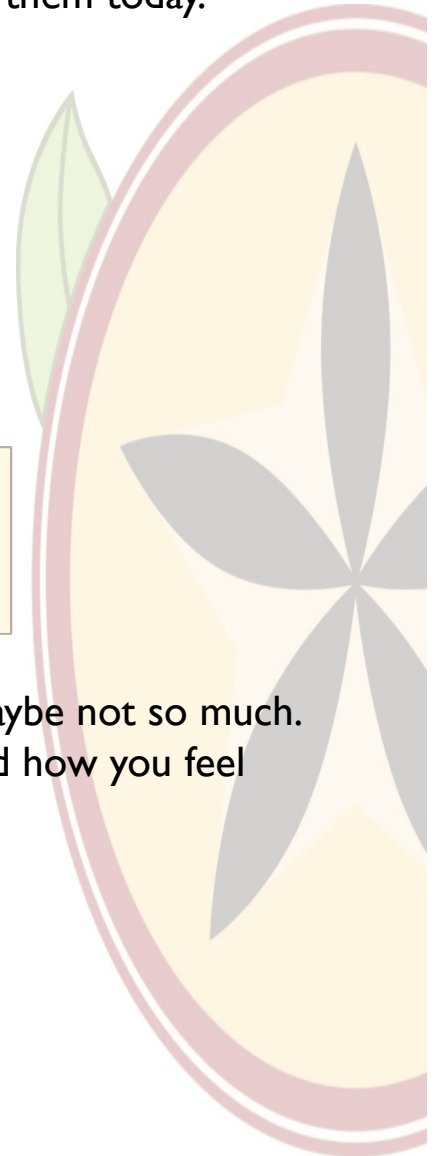


Trying Out: An Exercise for Parents

Describe 2 risks you took as an adolescent. Try to think of one risk that worked out for you; and one that really didn't. Explain how you felt about these risks at the time and how you feel about them today.

Trying Out: An Exercise for Teens

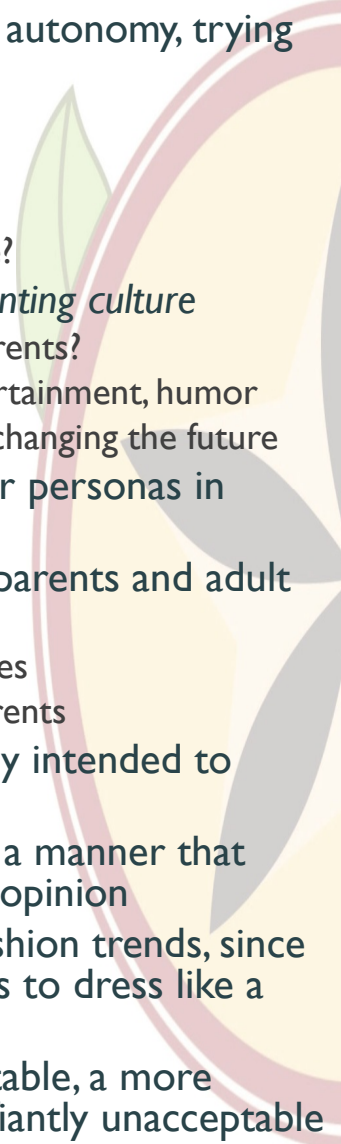
Describe one risks you are glad you took and one maybe not so much. Explain how you felt about these risks at the time and how you feel about them today.



Trying On

Checking out different identities to find one that fits

⊗ Key points about Trying On

- While trying out is about independence and autonomy, trying on is all about the search for identity
 - What is normal?
 - Am I normal?
 - Do I want to be normal?
 - Can I be unique and normal at the same time?
 - Involves the sacred adolescent duty of *reinventing culture*
 - Am I more like my peers or more like my parents?
 - Not just about fashion but about music, entertainment, humor
 - Pertains to how science and technology are changing the future
 - Teens try on different identities, costumes, or personas in order to find the ones that fit best
 - Trying on involves differentiating from both parents and adult society
 - Teen fashion often arises from poverty sources
 - May further differentiate teens from their parents
 - Often involve stereotypes that are specifically intended to provoke
 - Teen garb often dares adults to comment in a manner that confirms the teen's present disdain for adult opinion
 - Ironically, teen fashion choices drive adult fashion trends, since the best way for aging parent to feel young is to dress like a teen
 - But as one costume becomes socially acceptable, a more extreme version may be born to take its defiantly unacceptable place
 - Choice of costume becomes a primary symbol indicating which "team" the adolescent is seeking membership on
 - Each generation has its own set of persona or costumes that teens choose from
- 

Trying On: An Exercise for Parents

List 3 ways your generation reinvented culture when you were teens. How did your parents feel about these changes? Looking back, was the change a good idea?

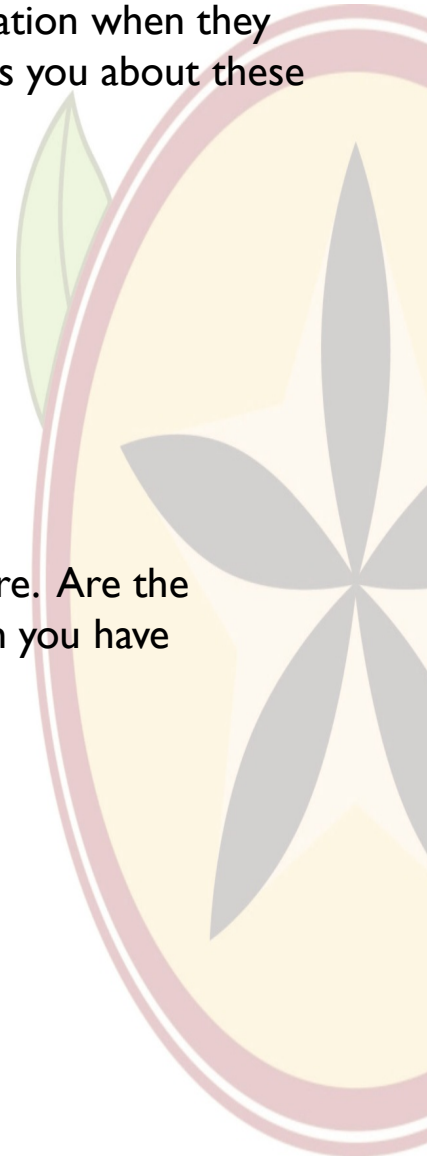
List 3 ways your you children's generation is reinventing culture. How did you feel about these changes?



Trying On: An Exercise for Teens

List 3 things that were started by your parents generation when they were teens that are still around today. What surprises you about these things?

List 3 ways that your generation has reinvented culture. Are the changes for the better? Will they still be around when you have teenaged children? What will they think?



Looking Good

Excessive focus on "appearances"

✪ Key points about Looking Good

- Doesn't pertain to physical appearance only, but anything that makes someone "look bad" in front of their peers.
- When asking groups of teens about how important looking good is at their school, the uniform answer is an immediate and resounding, "Really important!"
- Looking good is key to fitting in.
- At its best, the consequences of "looking bad" may include embarrassment and social discomfort.
- At its worst looking bad may result in ridicule, rejection, social exclusion, lowered self esteem, shame, humiliation—real or felt.
- The alternative to looking good is *saving face*.
 - Avoiding feelings of rejection, humiliation, failure or shame by responding in a manner intended to evoke the same.
 - Generally involves escalating tension that may result in violence but consistently makes the recipient feel violated.
 - Always creates emotional injury.
 - May be expressed through lying, denial, false bravado, arrogance, disrespect.
- The Law of Equals and Opposites:
 - Behavior that is intended to create the equivalent feeling in the target that the individual is experiencing themselves.
- While saving face used to be reserved for reaction to peers, more often now adults may be the target of this sort of behavior.
- Looking good involves adolescent self-consciousness and the imaginary audience

Looking Good:

The Role of the Imaginary Audience

✪ Imaginary Audience:

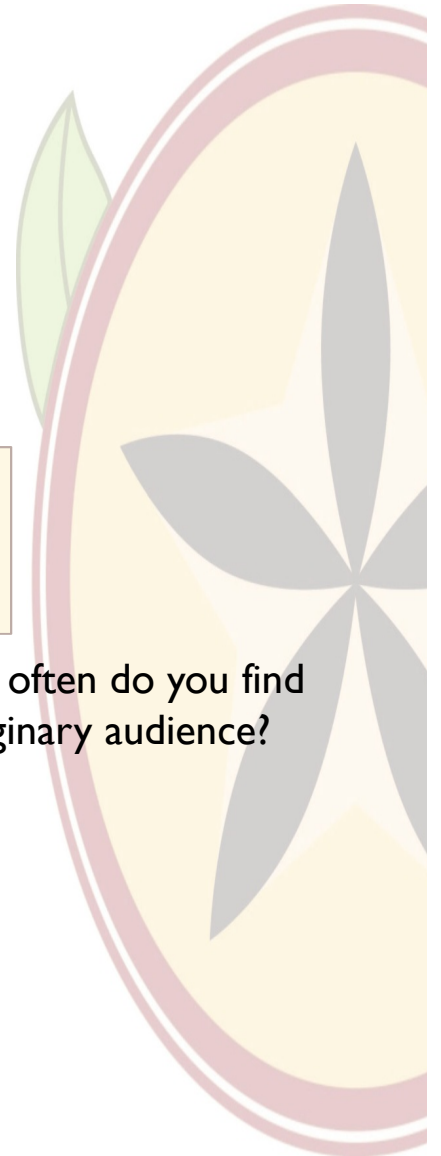
- In actual or impending social situations, the teen anticipates the reactions of other people toward himself or herself.
- Since these expectations are based on the belief that others are as admiring or as critical of the teen as they are themselves, the adolescent is continually constructing, or reacting to an imaginary audience
- "It is an audience because the young person believes that he or she will be the focus of attention; and it is imaginary because, in actual social situations, this is not usually the case (unless he or she contrives to make it so)."
- The dilemma is that there is a social reality to the imaginary audience, since it is impossible for the teen to predict whether in fact they may find themselves the very center of the negative attention they fear becoming; or the positive attention they crave.
- Furthermore, every teen has witnessed a peer become victim of the this sort of attention.
- Thus, fear of looking bad is a major driver of peer pressure, not because the teen desires to be like a peer, but because they fear rejection or ridicule if they are not.

Looking Good: An Exercise for Parents

How important is *Looking Good* in your workplace? How often does this rule of adolescence extend into adult life? How often do you find yourself rehearsing and rehashing your day to an imaginary audience?

Trying Out: An Exercise for Teens

How important is looking good at your school? How often do you find yourself rehearsing and rehashing your day to an imaginary audience?

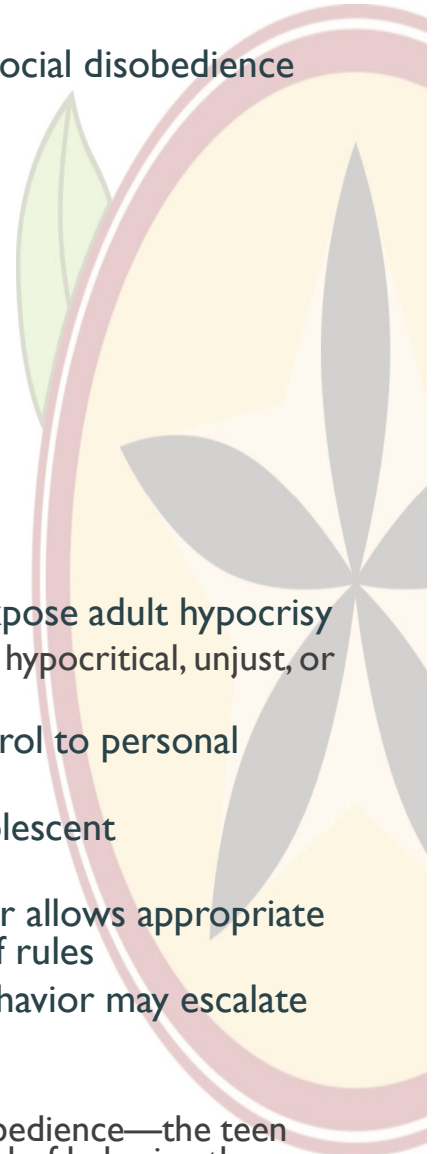


Getting Over

Bending, breaking or ignoring rules just to prove you can

🌟 Key Points about Getting Over

- Purposeful effort to assert autonomy through social disobedience
 - Oppositional behavior
 - Feigned compliance
- May be “minor” behaviors
 - Keeping secrets
 - Cussing
 - Messy room
- May be major behaviors
 - Skipping classes
 - Substance use
 - Sexual promiscuity
 - Violence
- The second sacred duty of adolescence is to expose adult hypocrisy
 - Getting over often targets rules perceived as hypocritical, unjust, or unfair
- Getting over involves a shift from parental control to personal control
- At some level, getting over may be a sign of adolescent assertiveness
- Efforts to recognize and respond to getting over allows appropriate conversation, consequences, or renegotiation of rules
- Without consequences or conversation, the behavior may escalate until an adequate parental reaction is obtained
- The Fallacy of Parental Permissiveness
 - The belief that—while permitting social disobedience—the teen will obediently restrict themselves to the level of behavior the parent so generously sanctions
 - When risky behavior is endorsed, the level of peril may escalate until the behavior is acknowledged as the defiance it was intended to be



Getting Over: An Exercise for Parents

Can *Getting Over* happen in a healthy way? How so, or why not? Does getting over always represent a betrayal of trust?

Getting Over: An Exercise for Teens

Can *Getting Over* happen in a healthy way? How so, or why not? Does getting over always represent a betrayal of trust?



Getting Some

Coping with sexual tension resulting from changing bodies

🌟 Key Points about Getting Some

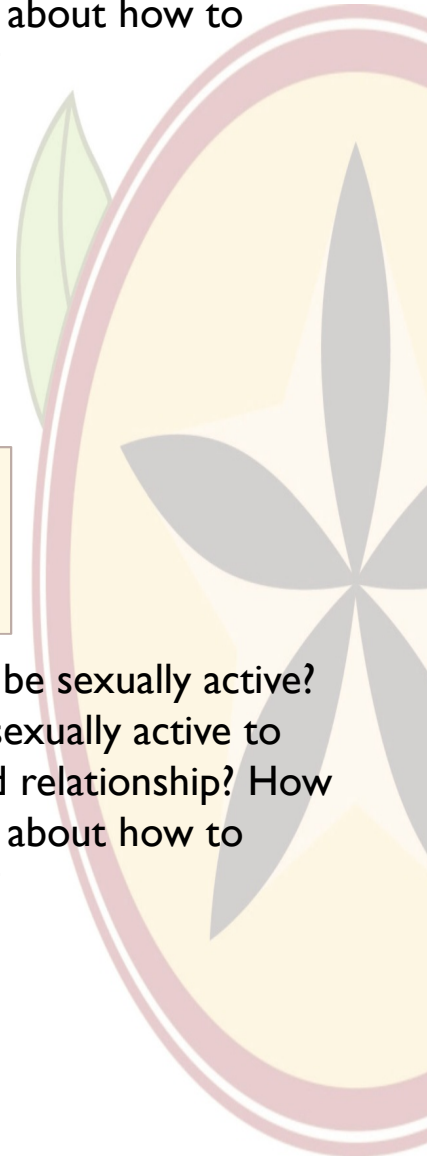
- *Getting Some* does not advocate or encourage teen sexual behavior, but rather recognizes the tension created by changing hormones, changing bodies, and societal mixed messages regarding teen sexuality.
- *Getting Some* is also about exploring the capacity to attract a partner.
- It is possible to have a long term emotionally intimate relationship without being sexually active.
- *Getting Some* acknowledges that unintended teen pregnancy and sexually transmitted infections are more harmful to lifelong health than teen sex.
- While abstinence is the only certain way to avoid pregnancy or sexually transmitted infection, there are reliable methods available to make these consequences less likely.
- Because of the societal messages encouraging casual sexual behavior, parents must be clear and effective regarding their expectations of their teens sexual behavior.
- The best of intentions have been vanished in the midst of impulsiveness related to romantic passion.
- Alcohol and drug use place teens in a situation where judgment may be impaired regarding sexual decision making.

Getting Some: An Exercise for Parents

How wrong do you think it is for teens to be sexually active? How important do you think it is for teens who are sexually active to be involved in a monogamous, emotionally committed relationship? How important do you think it is for teens to be educated about how to prevent pregnancy and sexually transmitted infection?

Getting Some: An Exercise for Teens

How wrong do you think it is for people your age to be sexually active? How important do you think it is for teens who are sexually active to be involved in a monogamous, emotionally committed relationship? How important do you think it is for teens to be educated about how to prevent pregnancy and sexually transmitted infection?



Getting Mine

A sense of entitlement born of an exaggerated cultural focus on materialism

☼ Key Points about Getting Mine

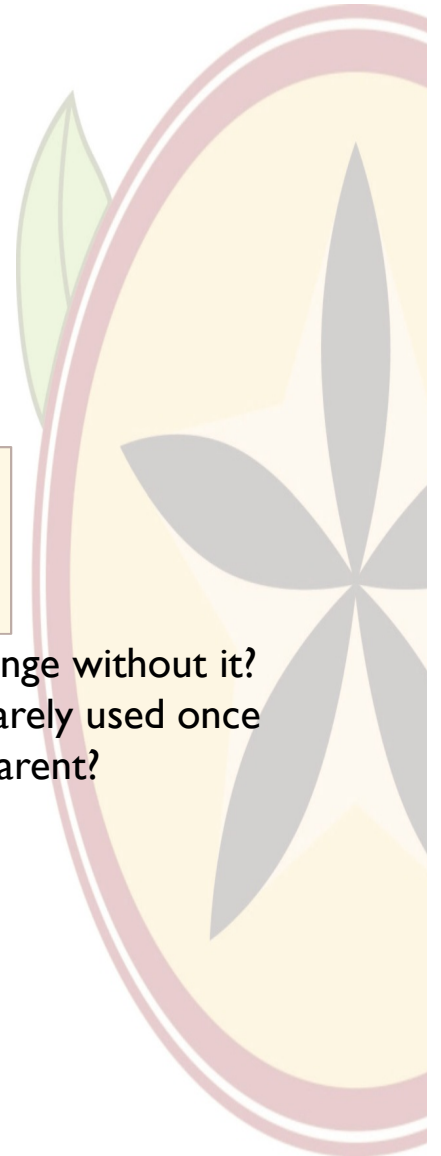
- Assumption #1: Society is more materialistic than ever.
- Assumption #2: There are more cool possessions to be materialistic about than ever.
- Assumption #3: *Getting Mine* is no longer enough. Now it is about *Getting Mine NOW*.
- Therefore, this generation of adolescents is the most demanding and materialistic ever.
- Rather than blaming teens for this materialism, it is incumbent upon adults to acknowledge that we are the most demanding and materialistic generation of adults ever; and have taught our children to be the most demanding and materialistic generation of teens ever.
- *Getting Mine* involves the *Mo' Betta Fallacy*
 - The belief that more possession are always better, when in fact it is nothing but more.
 - The value of each possession decreases the more possessions you have
- When *Getting Mine* is too fully embraced, it diminishes the value of relationships

Getting Mine: An Exercise for Parents

What is your favorite “toy”? How would your life change without it? Describe a possession you desperately wanted, but barely used once you had it? What is the best gift you ever gave your teen?

Getting Mine: An Exercise for Teens

What is your favorite “toy”? How would your life change without it? Describe a possession you desperately wanted, but barely used once you had it? What is the best gift you ever gave your parent?



Getting Out

Escaping the perception of dependence by leaving home

✪ Key Points about Getting Out

- The closer a teen is to leaving home, the more they tend to crave *Getting Out*
- Home sometimes becomes a symbol of the limits placed on the teen, causing the teen to feel trapped, unable to get away with things they believe to be reasonable.
- *Getting out* involves the desire—the need—for privacy.
- Teens sometimes perceive everyone else's parents and home superior to theirs, and even feel confused and offended when their friends actually LIKE their parents.
- Would rather a teen gathering take place at any home other than their own.
- Expectations of contribution to the upkeep and maintenance of their home becomes more and more difficult as the anticipation of leaving begins and the home feels less and less like it belongs to them.
- *Getting Out* often involves the tension between wanting to prove you can make it on your own, and fears about how difficult it will be.
- After moving out, home almost immediately becomes a more attractive option.
- But after moving out, expectations are forever changed—even if you move back in later.
- In many families, *Getting Out* has changed with the change in the economy.

Getting Out: An Exercise for Parents

List the 3 things you will miss most when your child finally does leave home?

Getting Out: An Exercise for Teens

List the 3 things you will miss most when you finally do leave home?



The Unofficial Rules of Parenting Adolescents: A Brief Preview

✳ Holding on

- There is a need to maintain your hold on your child, your authority, your intuition, your sense of personal control

✳ Letting go

- There is a simultaneous need to let go of your child, portions of your authority, and things that are beyond your control

✳ Butting in

- Parents must be willing to monitor teen choices, set clear rules, apply appropriate punishment and offer consistent discipline

✳ Butting out

- Parents must avoid the trap of over involvement with their teen

✳ Shoring up

- Offering support, encouragement, and nurturance through the self doubt and insecurity that often dominates adolescence

✳ Holding Down

- Temper support with realistic expectations of values and behaviors that give the teen permission to make healthy choices

✳ Staying Open

- Accepting that tolerance of generational differences (that do not place the child at substantial risk) in taste, rituals and behavior are a necessary part of parenting

✳ Standing Firm

- Establishing consistent rules and consequences proportional to the extent of the violation

