

A Perspective on Adolescence

Teenagers play out rage and defiance in our schools and families at an alarming rate. Looking back at the turn of the century, our grandparents began their early teens with essential work raising crops and families, moving directly from childhood to adulthood. We created the stage called adolescence when we moved away from farms into cities and had to provide our children with a long education for an industrialized and technological world. The high school and college years represent a prolonged and unique stage of childhood in which little demand on youngsters is made to assume adult responsibility.

Busy parents hope that their children will pick up their adult living skills at the appropriate age by examples from the family. Unfortunately, too many kids develop their inner senses of themselves from their "second family" of peers, drugs, electronics, and mass culture. This second family has no moral code, and it shows.

Contradictory advice thrown at parents over the last 30 years often leaves them wavering between permissiveness and tough discipline. We do know that the skills and attributes needed to move successfully through adolescence fall into four broad categories. Children need:

- ? **To feel respect for their parents and other adults.** The research clearly shows that respectful children feel more secure and less angry and are better able to resist being drawn into risky behavior by peers.

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HOW TO MANAGE ANGER

Constantly blowing your stack not only alienates others, it can also contribute to health problems, including headaches, stomach upset and heart attack. To take control:

Count to 10. When something angers you, give your body time to defuse before you react. Take three or four deep breaths. *Ask your self:* "Will this really matter a year from now?"

Walk it off. Go for a short stroll until you calm down. *Helpful:* Find a quiet place where you can think out loud and take a second look at how you're reacting to a situation.

Distract yourself. *Example:* In a traffic jam, play soothing music or listen to a relaxing program instead of pounding the horn. At work, dive into a task to turn negative energy into positive.

Keep a log. Monitor hostile thoughts to discover how frequently your temperature rises. *Benefit:* You'll help sort out the real causes of your anger, which are often something over which you have no control.

Ask for help. If managing outbursts seems impossible, don't be afraid to try counseling, meditation, lifestyle changes or other kinds of ongoing psychological help. Your health may depend on it.

Eat Fish Once A Week

Eating fish just one time a week can protect your heart. Recent research reported in the Journal of the American Medical Association, found that just one fish meal a week can cut in half your risk of sudden heart failure.

SWIMMER'S EAR TREATMENT

The American Academy of Otolaryngology recommends this homemade remedy for treating swimmer's ear. Mix in a dropper bottle one part each of rubbing alcohol and white vinegar. The alcohol helps dry out the ear canal while the vinegar makes the area inhospitable for bacteria and fungi.

Put a few drops of the solution in the ear, leave it in there for a few minutes, then tilt your head and allow the solution to run out.

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- ? **The capacity for mood mastery.** To be able to moderate their own emotional states and calm themselves down when upset or angry without resorting to their "second family" for soothing.
- ? **To learn peer smarts.** Not just the ability to make and keep friends, but how to walk away from friendships that are harmful or demeaning.
- ? **To develop emotional literacy.** The ability to talk about feelings, friends, dreams, and frustrations.

Our teens need us more than ever to help them develop the skills they need to carry them through adulthood.

Liquid Assets

You drink water every day, but are you aware of how much it does for your body? Here's a partial list:

- ? Regulates body temperature
- ? Accounts for up to 83% of blood
- ? Removes waste
- ? Helps carry nutrients and oxygen to cells
- ? Moistens oxygen for breathing
- ? Helps convert food into energy
- ? Projects and cushions vital organs
- ? Helps body absorb nutrients
- ? Cushions joints
- ? Makes up 75% of muscle

HOW TO GET THAT SECOND WIND



Feeling run down? You'll turn things around in five minutes if you...

Refuel. Snack on fiber-rich munchies, such as dried apricots, bananas, baby carrots or rye wafers. The fiber slows the release of glucose into your blood stream and helps fight energy dips.

Breath deeply. Every 1-2 hours, spend five minutes inhaling and exhaling deeply, hands on ribs. You'll promote calmness and a mental focus as well as renewed energy.

Go on an "Imagi-Cation." Close your eyes and take a mental vacation by imagining a peaceful scene on an island, in a meadow, by the ocean... Imagine yourself relaxing there.

Call a confidante. Use your personal support system; family, friends or co-workers to quickly unload and unwind.

Snap out of it. Splash cold water on your face, snap a rubber band worn on the wrist, or pop a breath mint (mint flavors are stimulating).

Take a "Good News" inventory. At the end of the day, jot down all the good things that happened. You'll be surprised at how much went right. Plus, you'll set yourself up for a good night's sleep and energize yourself for tomorrow.

HBA is your 24-hour employee assistance program. Eligible employees and family members may call for confidential assistance with personal, legal, childcare, financial, alcohol/drug and other problems. HBA has identified a variety of community resources and self help associations. Also available is a panel of professional counselors and hospitals that have agreed to provide free or low cost counseling and treatment services to persons who have been referred by Human Behavior Associates. Dial 1-800-937-7770 for information or assistance.