

**Teenagers tell
parents what
we need
to hear**

**The Kids
Are All Right**

FOR PARENTS OF TEENAGERS

National Youth Week 2013
Teenage Blogging Competition

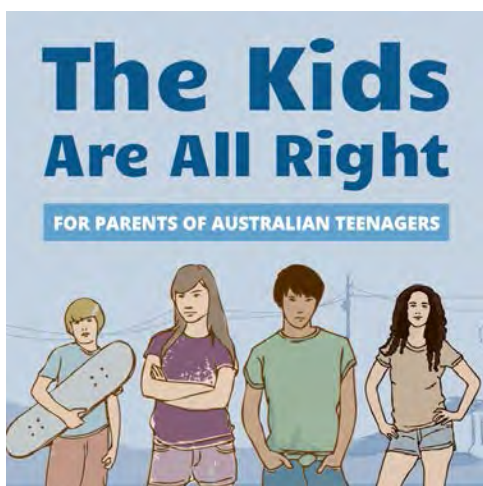
Teenage blogging competition 2013

The Kids Are All Right, the Australian website for parents of teenagers, ran a blogging competition for high school students during National Youth Week, 5-14 April 2013.

For the second year, we asked teenagers to tell us parents anything they thought we needed to hear. We picked five posts to feature each day of National Youth Week.

We chose entries that represented a variety of topics and perspectives that we felt would really speak to parents. But really, it is impossible to judge a teenager's heartfelt words to parents. All kids have something valuable to say. As there were so many more posts we wanted to publish, we decided to compile them into an ebook, for parents to read and the teenage writers to keep.

Publisher



The Kids Are All Right

(www.thekidsareallright.com.au) is an Australian website dedicated to parents of teenagers.

We help you navigate the challenges and joys of raising teenagers by providing information, articles and a supportive online community where you can share advice and share the load. [Read more.](#)

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**Special thanks to
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Independence

We will make mistakes and that's alright

Making mistakes is all part of life. We are who we are and what happens, happens. The overly used saying that we learn from our mistakes needs to be listened to. Parents are trying to protect us from the inevitable. Whether in our infancy, teenage years or adulthood parents are constantly preventing us from risks, and wondering what is best for us. Mistakes make us who we are. It gives us the determination to achieve something rather than not attempting at all. You've got to be in it to win it or when the going gets tough the tough gets going and if you don't sweat it you don't get it. Well I say let us decide who we are and tell parents to mind their own business.

In today's world parents are wrapping their kids in cotton wool. Their only attempt to keep their children from being hurt by the outside world is by not showing it to them at all. This is not how it works because one day the bird is going to leave the nest and there is no controlling what it does once it has. Parents need to expose their kids to the world. They need to teach the difference between right and wrong and trust that what they have taught will guide their child safely along its path. However, instead of teaching the bird to fly we are binding its wings. How do you expect a bird to fly without wings?

Overprotection of children isn't going to keep them safe. The only thing that will come out of it is a rude awakening to the real world. Many parents are protecting their children from themselves. Gone are

“Instead of teaching the bird to fly we are binding its wings”

the days when kids used to be kids. That is all ancient history now, out with the old and in with the new. We learn from our mistakes. How do we expect our generation or future generations to know what they are doing wrong if they don't make mistakes? Children need to be unleashed into the world with a guiding hand not locked up in a mental asylum. Everyone was a kid once. Children need to be listened to and action needs to be taken.

Who do parents think we are? The stereotypical teenager is radically different to the modern day one. Parents need to snap out of it and wake up. They need to understand that we are not what everyone perceives us to be. The grip needs to be loosened on children's freedom. Childhood can only be lived once and it is the only time to learn who we are and what we value. Wake up and realise that we are kids; we will make mistakes and that's alright.

Jasmine

The power of control

Sometimes, I think that maybe my parents are too controlling. Other times, I wish that they could control me more because sometimes I do get a bit out of control. I know that my parents are not the only ones that have had trouble with control over their kids.

Many parents try to control their children too much. Teenagers are nearly adults and I think that having the chance to explore life and becoming independent from their parents is something they should learn. I wonder what these parents are thinking, "If I let my kids go they'll do drugs and get in trouble, break the law..." The truth is, if your children are smart, they won't do these things. I doubt that all teenagers get drunk or violate the law, instead, most of the public stereotype the Australian teenager.

There are some teens that do need some more restriction. It isn't unnatural for children to develop their own personality, but of course, there are more socially acceptable manners of behaviour. Not swearing on public transport, letting older people sit down, and simple matters such as these are expected of young people and the general consensus suggests yes, youngsters are not doing this.

So what *is* the expected amount of control that teens want from their parents? Frankly, teenagers want the support and love from their elders, it's just that they don't realise how their

“Teenagers are nearly adults and having the chance to explore life and become independent from their parents is something they should learn”

parents are doing this. Cooking dinner, transportation, giving them pocket money and technology are just some things that parents often do for their children.

I think that both the parents and children need to understand what they expect of each other. If this cannot be met, how will the world become a better place?

Wilfred

Don't you guys have some spare time for me?

Last time I met you guys was almost two years ago. It feels like almost ten years because of the waiting that I have to go through. I feel too independent. I want some advice, talk to you face-to-face but I have to wait so long...

When I'm at home living with my guardian, I feel so out of place. Living with my so called aunty as my guardian, surprisingly it is very awkward. I thought that it would be at least somewhat comfortable but I guess not. When I ask her for advice, it doesn't really help and it annoys me that when I ask you guys for advice, you make it sound so simple. You make it sound like it's the easiest thing on earth. Remember the time when I asked you if I should dye my hair or not and straight away you said no? and I asked you why but you just said it was bad. But why? You never tell me reasons to a question but you always have an answer.

Sometimes I miss the times when I have you guys as a backbone. The two strong poles I can lean on when I'm sad, depressed, angry or just because I want someone to talk to other than my friends. But in this case, you are never there. I only speak to you on the phone, I see you once in every two years and you guys are always busy with work. Ever since the day where dad made a big mistake with money, he put a big financial burden on the entire family and due to that all you guys do was work, work, work and work. Don't you guys have some spare time for me? Just because I'm getting good grades, being

SRC at school and have regular outings with friends, doesn't give you the right to not show me affection. I crave for your affections... just because I don't talk to you and stay back, or just quietly stay in my room waiting for your call, have you thought about why I do this? I try so hard to get your attention but no, you are always busy. You try to make me happy by buying me things that I like but that doesn't help. It's just like those clichéd books where the rich kid of the rich parents get anything they want because the parent can afford anything to do with money but they can never afford love and time because love and time costs more than the dollar notes and coins.

Also, you always tell me to be good. But do you really think I follow everything that you say? Do you expect me to listen to you now after all those times when I asked for your time, even for 5 minutes? Well I hate to say this but when you tell me not to swear, it is so difficult. I swear everyday. It's my second language but of course you guys never approve because you always think of me as the "good" daughter that you are so proud of. Well let me slap you guys back to reality. Everyday, everywhere, every time there would be someone swearing and I guess I just picked it up. So I would like to say that I miss you guys. Although you guys may get on my nerves, I would like to depend on you and I would love to have advice from you along with reason to support your answer. Although I may act like I hate you, remember that I love you.

Ji Hyun

I've heard it enough!

Dad, I know that I have got to study well. I understand that I won't get anywhere in life until I get to University. Harbour the possibility that I might have listened to at least *one* of your hour-long lectures and that I *realise* that I should not bunk off school, talk in class, stay up late, go to parties, take drugs, drink alcohol, and any other of those atrocities that I have never done in the first place.

Is it trust? Do you have the feeling that you must drill these life lessons into my skull until I am driven to madness, so I will not forget them? Or perhaps you look at my peers and the dreadful example they set, thinking that I, your angelic daughter, will follow suit? I have always been different, always dedicated to my studies, never watching TV voluntarily. I understand that you may suspect my peers of spiralling ever downwards, but *me*? I would never do that. I want to become a doctor, you should expect no less. So I want you to believe that I won't become a '*teenager*' teenager, and yell at my mum and bicker with my brother and deal with drugs and things like that. Because - and believe me when I say this - I want to make you proud, just as much as you want to be proud of me. I love school, surprising as it may seem, although maths is a major hurdle. But don't I get up at 6:00 to take extra maths classes?

So I ask you this one small thing.

Trust me. Trust me that I'll be good girl. The world is evil, harsh, but you can trust

“Let me have more freedom, Dad.

Let me find myself”

me to go shopping with my friends and not get abducted, right? You can trust me to have a sleepover and sleep? I want more freedom, like my peers, but unlike most of them I'll be responsible. I appreciate that you want to protect me, but you don't have to wrap me in cotton-wool, embrace me with your trust as a sign of affection instead. Don't lock me in the house, keep me tied to your love.

To all parents who restrict their children, think of it this way - by trying to keep your children safe in their younger life, you are making them insecure of their own decisions in adulthood. By teaching them all of your life lessons, you are making them too dependant. Let us teenagers think ourselves, let us teach ourselves our own life lessons. We do like your gentle guidance, and understand sometimes when you restrict us, but we are ourselves and need the time, as developing teenagers, to create our identity.

Let me have more freedom, Dad. Let me find myself. Trust me.

Samara

Over-protective parents of today

Nowadays, parents are cotton wrapping their children and not letting them live life. It's a common issue that comes up a lot in newspaper discussions, "Are the parents today more controlling and over-protective than when they were kids?" The answer is yes. I often hear stories about my father who, when he was a kid used to play a game where you ran through an empty sewer pipe and set off a sky rocket to chase you. If you got hit you were out, and most definitely in hospital. He used to walk around the neighbourhood and blow up mailboxes, make homemade guns with marbles, stash cigarettes in books with cut out pages, and blow up his mother's brand new washing machine, along with setting a mosquito net alight after trying to kill a moth. But it was not only my father, my mother and her brothers also used to sell cigarettes to the local kids from their service station counter store. I can say now that if I did anything remotely like this... it would be the end of me.

One of the main issues many of my friends and I face is over-protectiveness. We understand that the world is becoming a more dangerous place, but that doesn't mean that if we go out to the shops with our friends we are going to do something crazy like what you see in stereotypical teenage movies. Parents just need to learn to give their child a little more freedom and trust as they emerge into their teenage years. I have never been out with my friends without an adult, my parents say that we are too

young, but something simple like going down to the park isn't going to kill us. Parents often judge their children's friends, and I get in trouble for what people I know do, which is completely unfair because it isn't me doing it, but just someone I know. With all this social media floating around, trust can be a big issue, even if you haven't had a negative experience with it. I just think that the parents now should think back to what they did in their younger years and say "hey, I was pretty free to do whatever, what's a little freedom going to do to my child?"

Boundaries are good when establishing freedom with your child. Such as: times that you have to be back, where you can go or how many people you can invite. I have heard of parties where thousands of people show up, and that's just unacceptable. Maybe if our parents gave us a little more trust and freedom to go out places with our friends, we wouldn't be so sneaky, mischievous and guilty of hiding things. I personally would love to go somewhere with my friends! I would completely respect that my parents are letting go, and that they are putting their trust in me, so I have to use it wisely. It would be understandable if they didn't let me go back again if I did something bad, but the fact that I haven't even gotten a chance is what I am trying to say is a bad thing. Parents don't know how their child is going to react in a situation like this, because the children have never had an opportunity to try. Our parents in this modern time need to take a step

back and remember that they were probably allowed to roam the streets and neighbourhood where they lived whenever they felt like it. I'm not saying that they should let us do whatever we want, but we should be allowed to have some fun with our friends while we are still young.

I have heard some ridiculous things in terms of safety. Local councils are now banning people from making tree houses because they are deemed "unsafe". I remember that a tree house was all I ever wanted when I was little, and most likely is a treasure to other kids. Parents are just getting too scared of their kids getting a scratch, or a bump, or a bruise, and will restrict them to little activity to avoid it. When has a tiny bruise from falling off a scooter or playground item ever hurt us? I mean, sure, it would have hurt a bit when you were younger but it's not life threatening. Parents are also sanitising their children's hands every two seconds! We need bacteria to keep healthy! It is proven that eating a bit of dirt as a child is good for you. Sanitising hands with Dettol is good before and after meals, but not after every single object your child touches. Our world is just being smothered in protection and cotton wrapped children. There is no fun in a child's life if there is no adventure, and you can't have adventure when parents act this way.

Overall, I guess that the children of the modern world will just have to find a way around over-protective parents. Whether

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that may be negotiating with the parents to give more freedom, or just asking them to not freak out about a tiny cut. In the end, we have to realise that the only reason they do this is because they don't want their children to get hurt, they want to keep them safe in their arms forever. Parents will just have to learn that everyone changes, and even though they love us and care for us, they can't stop us from growing up.

Tyler

There is such a thing as being 'over-involved'

I know that you believe getting involved in your children's lives is 'good parenting', but there is such a thing as being 'over-involved'. I'm sure many of you parents with teens experience the shrugging of shoulders when you ask us how our day was, the monotone replies of 'Yes...No... Fine...Ok... Meh', and the way we seem to hide in our rooms with the door shut, scarcely venturing out. It is not that we don't love you, or appreciate what you do for us, it's just that we are at that awkward stage of life between young, needy dependent children, and independent, grown-up adults. Being a teenager means figuring things out, learning from experiences, and shaping our futures, and you trying harder to push your way into our worlds when we shove you away isn't helping! Trying to get too involved our lives prevents us from learning to be independent.

You may have all been teenagers once, but you only understand the biology of it. Only teenagers today can understand what it means to be a teenager in 2013. Parents cannot possibly understand all that goes on at school, on social media sites, and in the social world. Only fellow teens can truly understand you. I know that if I was annoyed at some girl at school, or my boyfriend had just dumped me, the first person I would want to talk to was my best friend. Why? Because as a child, you run to your parents for help; to fight those monsters under the bed, or to chastise your older sibling for hitting you. As an adult, you fight your

own battles. But as a teenager, the only people who can succeed in helping you fight your battles are your friends, because only they truly understand what it means to be a teenager. Parents shouldn't interfere with their teenagers' lives because, no matter how hard they try to push into their worlds, they can never overcome the boundaries that separate us teenagers from them. Instead, parents need to let us find our own way, with the help of our friends, to cross those boundaries and join them, in the world of adulthood.

You may feel that it is your responsibility as parents to be involved in our lives, and that it would be considered 'bad parenting' if you just stood back and watched, or took no interest in our lives at all. However, trying too hard is not helpful either. Instead, it is better to let us teenagers approach you, let us invite you into our worlds, instead of you trying to barge your way in. For example, as I start to think about learning to drive, which I will not be doing for another two years, everyone in the family seems to be pushing me, and trying to tell me that they will teach me to drive and that their car will one day be my car. Yet, no one seems to want to listen to what I want in the matter. While everyone has been trying to force their way into a small corner of my world, they've forgotten that, as I am going to be the one learning to drive, it is, in the end, my decision.

The funny thing is, the majority of family members who are pushing their way in,

instead of me inviting them, are going to suffer the disappointment of being shoved back out, when I tell them: "I am not learning to drive in your car because it is an automatic, and I am getting a manual license, and I don't really want you to teach me to drive anyway, because I have already asked my Dad to teach me." Parents need to let us reach out to them instead of the other way around. Trying to get too involved in our lives isn't what we want.

I know you worry about us, but being too nosy is not helping. Constantly wanting to know what we're doing, where we're going, who we're going with and why we're going, makes us feel like we're criminals. Letting us have the freedom to just live our lives and learn to grow up without you questioning every motive is what we need. For example, if I asked my Mum if I could go to the movies, she would bombard me with a thousand questions - "who are you going with?", "why do you want to go?", "which cinema?", "what movie?", "what is it rated?", "what time does it start?", "what time does it finish?". Then she'll insist on driving me to the cinema and waiting till she sees me go in. If my friends aren't there when she drops me off, then she makes me text her once they have arrived. I also have to text her as soon as the movie is finished so she can chauffeur me back home. It feels as though parents are trying to give us freedom to go out, yet there are so many rules that come with that freedom that it no longer feels like freedom.

“Let us shape our lives and cross those boundaries into adulthood”

You parents make us feel like we're criminals on probation - while we are not confined to the prison cells of home, we can't even meet up with our friends without you questioning every little thing, and sticking your nose in where it is not wanted. Being too involved in our lives isn't helping us learn to grow up and learn about the responsibilities that come with having freedom. Being too interested and involved in our lives is not what we want.

Parents who read this may try to argue that they want to be involved in our lives because they love us. But if you truly love us, then let us find our own way in this world. Let us shape our lives and cross those boundaries into adulthood. We can only do this with your help, and trying to push your way into our lives, uninvited, is not helping. So instead, let us reach out to you when we are ready.

Maia

It is time you understood your teenagers have grown up

I feel like it is time for you to understand. We know that we used to be your 'little angels' or 'your babies' but you need to see that we are no longer those 2 year-old toddlers who just learnt to walk and talk. We all hate being treated as if we do not know what is best for us or just not getting our way. But the worst of all, is being treated like we are younger than what we really are; like those same 2 year-old babies. Every year we are becoming older and more responsible but to you we are not moving forward.

Firstly, I would like to put forth a true fact. Mention teenagers and maturity in the same phrase, in a room full of you parents, and watch your reaction. The result will be everything from smiles to snickers. This is true because all parents would do this exact thing. However, it is disappointing because we teens expect you to guide us along the way to our future, not 'change the direction' and turn us around. You parents think of us as those same stereotypical gate-crashers who trashed that bus and assaulted those police. This is one of the reasons why you treat us all like kids; you feel we will turn into something we're not.

We know that all parents want to feel that when their child leaves home, he or she will be mature enough to succeed in life – to be able to handle whatever life hands out. We also thank you for that. But, we will also need to be confident, mature and strong-willed. We will never develop these skills if you continue to

see us as those small two-year old monsters.

Also, another reason why you see us as children is because you know that teens have no sense of responsibility. I have my responsibilities. I always do my own laundry, I clean my room every week, I take part in sport, I have homework, exams and assignments from every subject and on top of that I do extra-curricula activities. However, I am still said to have no responsibility by my parents.

Honestly, the only reason why they say this is because we are not ready to be adults. That is why we are called 'teen/agers' and why we are still in school. We teenagers are not afraid to admit that. But it is your turn to admit that your teenaged children do show responsibility no matter how little it is.

Lastly, scientists have proven that your teenage kids are in the final process of their brain developing. But that does not mean we are stupid and act wild because our brain has not fully settled. As a matter of fact, 14-15 year olds actually have a brain that functions much better than 50 year olds. Even our point of reasoning is higher. This says that most of us teenagers have passed the stage where you used to feed us and control our lives.

Remember when your teenage kid was stressed out on the study table trying to work their way around the lot of

assessment tasks they were assigned to? That shows that we are not children and that we do take initiative in our actions. And remember when you thought about recapturing our youth by cutting off our allowance?

I know many of you would disagree with this post because you think we are irresponsible and act very immature.

This is why we are seen as children to you. Yet, we hold multiple responsibilities and are not all those stereotypical teenagers who act like they have the whole world in their hands.

So, parents, it is time you understood that your teenagers have grown up and do not want to be those two-year old toddlers anymore.

Aman

Children must be given freedom

Children must be given freedom to make decisions and deal with peers individually. Children and teenagers will not mature without the well-deserved chance to prove their astonishing ability to understand what is best for them and their needs. The time they choose to spend time and interact with the appropriate people and choose sensible and safe places to meet them. All children need to learn effective organisation skills so they can balance their studies and social interactions with their friends and all people. They must deal with social pressures on their own and learn how to deal with their peers which all create a positive environment for young people.

A teenager as an individual is undoubtedly trustworthy to organise who and where they can meet different people. It is obvious and keeps them

aware of danger and safety with different groups of people. When they feel uncomfortable with going somewhere or meeting someone, they are the person who knows best, not their parents.

Studies show that a human instinctively wants to do the opposite of what they are told by an authority figure. In a situation, a girl could be asked to meet a friend who she had begun to interact with online. She felt as though they were close and good friends but did not feel comfortable meeting her so she decided not to, but if her parents had intervened and made a huge deal about her meeting someone, naturally she would be more inclined to rebel and try as hard as possible to meet her. In this way the girl is also fighting peer pressure as she was asked to meet someone who she felt close with but it could break or

sever their friendship by refusing to meet her. So parents must allow children to make good choices for themselves rather than force them to.

Social pressure is incredibly influencing to young people today. Every aspect of life such as schooling, going out and most commonly parents are controlling. Parents can be much too demanding and expect too much from their children that causes tremendous stress and low self-esteem. Many parents follow and shadow their child's every step and thought and pushes them into or pull them out of events and activities that they do or don't want to participate in. Statistics show that 1 in 5 children only participate in a sport or group because their parents have forced them to chase, not their own dream, but their parents who are trying to relive their childhood.

Children must be able to make their own decision and participate in activities they enjoy rather than what their parents force them to do. Although young people can be disorganised with the balance between study and social interactions it is due to parents that will not allow their children to learn from their mistakes and make individual choices.

Parents must allow their children to grow up and mature by making their own decisions and not forcing children to do things they don't want to. Peer pressure is increasingly building but so is awareness for children to make good

“Parents must allow children to make good choices for themselves rather than force them to”

decisions and keep safe in many different situations. Therefore children must be given more freedom from their parents to deal and balance with social interactions and education.

Marian

When will parents let us grow up?

A couple of weeks ago, I attended a party in the Shire. The host was a friend of mine from an inner city private school. My parents didn't know him and were worried about my safety when I was going somewhere they didn't know, being with people they didn't know and doing things that they had no idea about. 90% of the girls were sporting short, tight dresses, high heels and caked faces.

I didn't personally feel compelled to consume alcohol to have 'a good time', when I was already having a lot of fun just dancing and swimming. But some people did whether to look cool or to appear more confident. I think if their parents found out about this, they wouldn't be too happy.

Parents are always saying 'you are growing up too fast, you teenagers'. But I think that we are at that awkward age between being a carefree kid who think that saying the f word is naughty and a young adult whose idea of a good time is getting drunk at partying. We are too old to be playing pass the parcel but too young to go clubbing and drinking legally, to be in love with someone for real.

I was in the car with my mum the other day and we were talking about the consumption of alcohol at parties. She said that when I was 14 and a half (I am young for my year) that she would let me take sips at parties as long as I knew exactly what I was drinking and was responsible. She said that her and my dad would be more than happy to let me have sips of

wine at home, simply to experiment in a safe environment.

While some parents may question my mother's beliefs and actions, I believe that her way is fair and makes sense. I know, being a teenager, that if our parents tell us not to do something, we suddenly felt more compelled to do it. So if my mum is letting me make my own decisions, within reason and in a safe environment, it is better for me. For some parents the idea of seeing their 'little girl' drinking, wearing tight dresses or interacting with those aliens known commonly as boys is just too much. They want their girl to be in pigtails and pink skirts forever.

Sometimes my dad says to me 'you aren't my little girl anymore'. In a way this is true, but in another it isn't. I am still his daughter and I still love him and obey him, well most of the time anyway. I just enjoy hanging out with my friends and dressing up more than reading picture books and watching Bob the Builder. I mean, I still get tucked into bed occasionally.

I believe that if parents let us hang out with friends, dress up and go to parties and listen to our music that has the occasional swear word in it, we will appreciate and have more trust in our parents. If they start to treat us like young adults maybe we can better fulfil their expectations of their many chores and lectures won't go to waste.

Rhea

Stop! There's nothing wrong with fun!

The purpose of this post is to inform you that we, as your children, are not 'property'. We are all individual human beings each of us with our own opinions, will and choice. Even if it was you who had raised us as infants, there will eventually be a time to let us go take care of ourselves and find our own paths.

However, I want to firstly thank all parents who have raised and love their children, especially, in more fortunate cases, for giving us an education. You've taught us morals, how to care for ourselves and others, responsibilities, and also how to do basic things such as eat and walk. Thank you.

Even though I do not live in China, I am of a Chinese background. During my parents' childhood, a large majority of China lived in poverty. Families were barely able to provide 3 meals a day and the children had to walk 2km back and forth from school, if they were eligible for an education that is. In an attempt to find a better life for their future family, my mother and father had taken a leap of faith into the unknown and migrated overseas to a different 'world'. I truly appreciate the multicultural community I live in and all my parents have done for me and my sisters.

Most Asian parents push their children extremely hard in school. This is because they wish for their child(ren) to be in the top and have a brighter future. I would like to congratulate and thank you, if you are a parent who doesn't force their

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child to study, but rather someone who trusts that your child cares about their own learning and future.

My parents have never 'forced' me or my siblings to study and trust that we do, but I have many friends who aren't so lucky and have been forced into studying with the excuse, "it's for your own good". These friends of mine are allowed 'privileges' if they achieve high marks in school. Yet, if they fail to reach their parents' expectations, then they will be grounded or have their 'privileges' taken away. Sometimes, the 'privileges' will even be taken away according to the parent's mood. These so called privileges are usually phones or electronic gadgets, social networking sites, personal leisure time and pocket money.

I think it is simply unnecessary for parents to do things like this. There is absolutely nothing wrong with having fun and relaxing, it is even proven to be better for the human body and brain if your leisure time is balanced out with work. Having fun shouldn't be counted as a 'privilege', it should be something that all human beings have access to.

Parents shouldn't be able to restrict their children in such ways that we are basically their property. Learning is

extremely important, but no human can constantly study and work without cracking. There is no need to remove things that will help your child(ren) to live better.

I understand that parents do things with the best interest for their children, and usually, it actually is, but nevertheless, your children may wish to actually live their own lives in their own control and not as your property. There is nothing wrong with enjoying life.

Willie

World

How we can help the world

Climate change is now a very familiar word to people; we hear it in the news, at school and in our daily life. We hear about polar bears struggling to survive on the reducing icecap, and countries overwhelmed by water. Unfortunate things happen around the globe and sometimes we all wonder, “What can we do to help?”

It is a big issue and there are lots of people, associations and governments that are putting millions of dollars on building wind farm, or solar panel systems. However, my point is that even if you do not pay as much money, or no money, as long you want to you can help.

First, you can simply recycle anything you can, paper, aluminium cans, plastic bottles, cardboard and many more. By reducing your household garbage by 50%, you will release 2400 pounds of carbon dioxide a year. It’s a tiny bit you are saving, but it will add up to millions pounds if many people are doing it, and even more if a whole nation is doing it. You can also turn off your air-conditioning when you do not really feel like you need it on. Or change your regular light bulb to a CFL light bulb. And there is lot more things you can do. I hope all people that have read this blog will wish to help by doing their part.

Anna

“We hear about polar bears struggling to survive on the reducing icecap, and countries overwhelmed by water. Unfortunate things happen around the globe and sometimes we all wonder, “What can we do to help?”

Parenting

Stop fighting! I am hurt!

Today, I want to talk about a very serious thing that occurs in most family. That's the affect to children from their parents.

What parents are doing is what their children are doing. If you are happy, then I will be happy. But if you always sad, keep fighting with each other all the day, then I will be sad and I won't know how to be good to people. That's because you're my parents and you affect my behaviour and personality every day, every hour and every moment.

There's one of my own personal example. My mom and dad love each other, I am sure. But they always fight with others, saying things like "I hate you!", "why did I married with you!" or "we have to divorce". Each times their words getting mean and meaner. You know how afraid I feel when you fight? You know how hurt I feel after you curse each other? I feel you are enemies; but we are family!

You know how afraid I feel when you fight? You know how hurt I feel after you curse each other? I feel you are enemies; but we are family! I become sad all the day and live in the fear. I just don't get it. Why do people saying bad things to hurt other's heart? I know you don't want to do that, because it's not only hurting the person you married, it's hurting me and your heart as well. I hate yell and cry, but you do it every day. You created me out of love, please don't bring me up in hate!

The doctor's children have a very big probability of become a doctor, the butcher's children have a very big probability of become a butcher, and the mean parents' children have a very big probability of become rude people.

We have to show the good side of us to our children, we have to stop fighting, because they are learning from us, because they worried about us all the time, because love understands love!

But I am sure this is not only one's fault, if we want to have a happy family, we work it out together. I believe parents can make things right, because they don't want their children to be sad. I hope all the parents can hold their hands and watching their children grow up, I hope we can all live in love. I really hope.

Eva



You had your way, we had no say

Never deprive your child of their own freedom. Never force them to do something they don't want to do. Because that was how my parents brought me up as a child, and it only resulted in my pain and suffering.

They had their way, I had no say.

They could get me to do whatever they liked, by threatening to slap me. I had no choice, but to follow their ideas, usually something I abhorred.

They had their way, I had no say.

I could still clearly remember that incident. One day, I was playing around with my cousin, who was two years younger than me. She was holding one of my favourite toys, and suddenly, she ripped its head off. I didn't know if it was an accident or a trick done on purpose, but she didn't say sorry. Therefore, I started yelling at her about her carelessness and impolite manners. She ran off, and within a couple minutes of my mum stormed in.

"What's going on?" she asked in an angry manner.

"She ripped off the head of my favourite toy, and she wouldn't even say sorry." I explained very upset.

"No she's telling a lie!" my cousin screamed. She started to cry.

"Look what you did to your cousin!" my mum shouted, "You made her cry! I don't care what you did. You're the older one, so you should be more educated and mature than your cousin. So apologise."

"No," I mumbled.

"What did you say?" my mum asked.

"I don't want to apologise." I said. "I didn't do anything to her. She was the one who destroyed my toy, so why do I have to apologise? It doesn't make any sense."

"Apologise now or else..."

She held out a big wooden ruler in her hands, gesturing to hit me.

"I give you five seconds," mum said, "Five...four...three...two...are you still not willing to do what I've asked you to do?"

I shook my head in silence.

I felt a big slap on my shoulder, and the ruler broke. She kicked me down to the ground. "Say sorry to your cousin."

Tears of pain rolled down my cheeks. "Sorry," I mumbled scared and upset.

"Louder," my mum yelled, "that was just like a mouse squeak."

"I'm SORRY!" I shouted, reluctant for this word to come out of my mouth.

"You don't need to shout," my mum complained, "this is not a shouting contest."

"I don't care," I yelled.

I told you not to shout!" she yelled, "Do you want me to beat you up again?"

A burning slap landed across my face. I didn't say anything this time.

"You need to be more mature next time," my mum said.

My mum and I walked out of the room. When we passed our cousin, she made a 'humph' sound as if to show that she was much better than me.

They had their way, I had no say.

So to all parents, please don't threaten your children with slaps and yells. We need your appreciation for everything they do. We understand that everything you are doing is for our own sake, but we need you to know that we still require your support and encouragement . When you get angry at us, think of the problem from our perspective, and you will understand why they are doing this.

You will have your way, while we will have our say.

Leannah

“They could get me to do whatever they liked, by threatening to slap me. I had no choice, but to follow their ideas”

A good family relationship is one of life's gifts

I find that these days more and more is being expected of kids. I don't have a problem with this, in fact I believe it a good thing. But as parents your judgement of us that is based on what you did and what was appropriate when you were at school is no longer relevant. This isn't just because more is being expected of us at school; it is also because society nowadays has different expectations to what it had when you were a student. Not better, not worse, but just different.

You claim to be sympathetic and "remember being in our position," but then still manage to be furious at us for things out of our control, such as how other people our age act. It must be pointed out that we no longer live in the prude society of your childhood.

You try to protect us from "modern evils," stalking us on Facebook for our "own good," and yet, do you not realise that when you were a child it was appropriate for you to run away with friends for hours at a time without supervision? And somehow we are the ones who are in great danger? You tell me stories with a laugh and a grin on your face about how you and your friends would always have to hide from the nuns when you went for a smoke in your lunch break. But you still manage to be angry beyond the point of reason if I am home from an outing with friends late, even by just minutes.

If you are constantly telling me of how aggrieved you are by how strict your

"Why don't you want us to have a better relationship?"

parents were when you were a teenager, then why don't you want us to have a better relationship?

I think good relationships with your family are one of life's greatest gifts. This is something that many people of your generation were robbed of. Every time we visit our grandparents I can see the tensions of being their middle aged child. You still feel wronged for their unnecessary anger, for the way they would accuse you of acting in ways that were the worst of stereotypes. But you notice me on my computer, and all you can see is a time-wasting, inappropriate content-accessing child who is at the mercy of the evils of the world and yet capable of being the bane of society.

I don't want a relationship with my parents turning out the way it does with so many others. Teenagers DO try to please our parents. But double standards and a refusal to be pleased don't allow us to do so.

Raphael

What a hypocrite!

Do you remember that time? "Cookies will make you fat. Don't get addicted." You couldn't talk from then on because of all the biscuits you had crammed into your mouth.

Or "I want you to become a doctor. Don't give up on your dream." You were halfway through medical college before you gave up on yours.

"Don't smoke!" You do. "Don't drink alcohol." Who downs all the Johnny Walker in this house? "Don't yell!" Ahem!

Hypocritical parents are not teaching us anything. Practise what you preach, because we *do* follow your examples, bad or good. If you swear, we learn. If you yell, it becomes acceptable in our eyes. If you don't believe that we follow in your example, think of us when we were very little. The only reason that we speak is because you did, right?

You claim that you only want to stop us from making the same mistakes that you did, but this is only partially true. If you actually cared, then would you not go to any lengths to make yourself a better person? It is laziness, pure laziness. It seems too hard to quit smoking or stop drinking, so the easiest way out is to carry on drinking or smoking! Then, do you think, a telling-off is sufficient to prevent us from following in your footsteps? Not at all.

“Hypocritical
parents are not
teaching us
anything.
Practise what you
preach, because we
do follow your
examples, bad or
good”

Teach us the right thing by doing the right thing. Because we do follow your example.

Tamara

Why parents should encourage their children to be active

I think parents should allow their children to play a contact sport if they wish, or maybe even encourage them to take up another sport as a hobby. It helps physically, emotionally and mentally. Many parents do not allow their children to go outside and be active, sometimes this can be because of the physical contact involved in sports such as football, AFL, hockey, etc. These parents do not realise that by playing these sports it would make their child stronger physically, mentally and mentally, therefore benefitting from it. If parents help their child choose the right sport they can avoid some injuries, and will be able to build up strength, therefore eventually not being as sensitive to injuries.

Many parents would rather have their kids studying than being outdoors playing a sport because of the problem of balancing out priorities. Studying should be balanced out with physical activity. Once again, with the parents' guide, the child may be able to sort out their priorities and complete homework as well as playing a sport.

Physical activity is an important part of life and sometimes serves as a therapeutic alternative rather than counselling. It helps release the build up of energy inside and is very calming, despite sports being fast paced. Walking or jogging is free and may just do the trick whereas psychologists and counsellors can cost up to thousands a week. This is another way of physical

activity and sports benefitting emotionally and mentally.

Some parents and carers do not support the idea of sports/physical activity because they believe it costs a large amount of money. This is not necessarily true as there are many alternatives to costly sports, such as jogging, walking, tennis, netball, basketball, soccer, football, and many more sports you are able to play for free in your local court/park.

Many people make the excuse that "there is not enough time for sport". I think this is absolute nonsense as there is always time for sport, your child could be playing sports and being active in the afternoons instead of sitting at their computer on Facebook or Twitter for hours. The internet, tv and gaming consoles (eg PlayStation, Xbox, etc) is far too time consuming and not that useful. Instead of letting your child waste their time on these, encourage them to play a sport, and if they aren't convinced, there are always other 'active' gaming consoles such as Wii, which requires you to move around.

I believe parents should allow and encourage sports for their children because it benefits physically, mentally and emotionally, it is cheap (sometimes even free), and is a better time killer than internet, tv and video games.

Talei

Sticks and stones may break our bones, words will leave us scarred

We go through life with that little rhyme.

Sticks and stones may break my bones
but words will never hurt me.

But the reality sticks, words hurt. No matter who you are or where you come from words can leave you scarred. It has taken me 17 years to realize this, 17 years of words getting thrown at me and 17 years of me throwing words back. It's the ongoing war of bullying. The 'he said she said', I MUST RETALIATE or I will be referred to as the 'loser' who couldn't think of something mean to say. Then I make them cry, I took it too far, that little joke became something that they won't forget. Then they ask me why did you do it? And I say, if words never hurt that means I can say anything and they won't be hurt.

But that's wrong, that little rhyme will never hold truth.

We spend our lives battling the playground bully, the bully who called us fat, the bully who told us we weren't beautiful and it's about time we changed our mindset. That sick little rhyme is all a big lie and it is about time we changed it into something more truthful, something that speaks to everyone, something that promotes beauty instead of torment.

So instead of telling your kid that words don't hurt them, grab your kid, look



them in the eye and tell them they are beautiful. Tell them that the world is mean and people are mean, but right now in this moment I love you and I always will love you and that is the only thing that matters.

Shari

Dear parents, thank you

Thank you for raising us the way society wants us to be raised, even if it is unintentional. The view most teenagers have been given on life is simple, and complete. We know that all people are people, and most deserve better than what they have, and the best thing for us to do is to try our hardest. Not all teenagers are silly, we do love you, and we do know how much you support and give to us.

We teenagers can be the most annoying, self-centered people in the world at times, but you still love, feed, house and protect us. You sometimes give us too much protection, which we know is only because you only want the best for us. You have given us the best start in life, some can only dream of. Because of your caring and selfless nature, we have been raised to appreciate. We have been raised to the best of your ability, and we are your masterpieces. Without you, we would literally, and metaphorically, not exist. Without someone to hold, and to lean on, we would simply struggle to survive.

Teenagers can make wrong choices. Everybody does. This does not mean that we are bad, it does not mean that we are corrupted, it just means that we did something we are not proud of. Everybody makes mistakes, and if you hammer that one mistake into them, they won't be able to get away from it. They will drift further and further away from you, and make you as distant as possible. Never let that happen. Despite

what we say, teenagers need parents to tell them what and what not to do. We need as much support as possible. The world around us is a rough place. We know that. We accept the dangers and possibilities surrounding it. We know that you do as much as possible to protect us from it. To keep us safe is a large promise, but you manage to keep it. To us, the world is something we want to explore. Our lives are only just starting, and we want to do everything we can as quickly as possible. That includes dating, drugs, sex, and travelling around the world. We need to be encouraged to try new things, excluding anything that takes away from who we are.

We have been born into the parents most suited to raise us. You, as parents, share your teenagers DNA. You know exactly what to do, and even if you don't, you can always find a way to make things better. Thanks, really. We do love you, even if we don't say it most of the time. It is difficult, being a teenager, and sometimes we forget what we have, until it is almost gone. Thanks, parents, we love you.

Steph

The Perfect Parent (PP) - A 10-step recipe

Over many years of careful observation of parents – young and old, singles and couples, completely wacko and completely normal, the Parent Critic has devised a clear and concise recipe for the Perfect Parent. Along the way, she has also created an essential list of things it is essential *not* to include in the creation of your Perfect Parent.

Ingredients

Dry:

1 cup of kindness
1 ½ cups of fairness
1 cup of support
½ a cup of friendliness
¾ of a cup of honesty
4 cups of understanding

Spices:

A pinch of silliness
6 drops of essence of humour
A dash of randomness
¼ of a teaspoon of strictness
50g of sportiness
2 teaspoons of musicality

Wet:

255ml of fun
50ml of patience
100ml of protection
1 teaspoon of caring
1 teaspoon of First Aid training
1 tablespoon of finding-lost-things
At least 20 years of life experience
A bucket of love

Method

1. Combine the kindness with the fairness. Mix thoroughly.
2. In a separate bowl, cream fun and support until mixture is a light purple.
3. Add patience, protection and caring to the 1st mixture and beat until lumps are no longer visible.
4. In a small bowl, combine the silliness, essence of humour and randomness and grind into a thick paste, before adding the strictness and the First Aid training slowly, in between grindings. Add this mixture to the creamed fun and support, and again beat until lumps are non-existent. The mixture should now be a fluorescent orange.
5. Mix the finding-lost-things with the life experience continuously, until the liquid has turned green. Then, pour it slowly into the orange mixture, beating in between

additions. Once the mixture is completely combined, it will turn chocolate brown. Refrigerate for 15 minutes.

6. While the 2nd mixture is cooling, mix the sportiness, musicality and friendliness in a small bowl, before adding to the yellow mixture. Mix well. The mixture will turn red sometime during the mixing process.
7. Add the honesty and understanding to the red mixture, beating after addition. The mixture will turn chocolate brown when properly combined.
8. Take the other mixture out of the refrigerator. Now, this is the essential part. If the mixtures are not exactly the same shade of brown, do not combine them. Take them separately, in the dead of night, and dispose of them where they will never find each other. However, if they are, combine them and beat for six hours with an electric mixer. (The electric mixer will also affect the level of technophobia your parent has. Use it a lot during the baking process, and you'll be fine. Don't use it at all – then watch out!)
9. After the mixture has been beaten for six hours, turn the electric mixer off and inspect the mixture. You should now be left with a bowl of chocolate brown powder.
10. Pour the love into the bowl and mix well.

Do NOT Include:

- Sulkiness
- Hatred of animals (especially ones you like)
- The ability to talk for hours about their children, in front of their children
- Selfishness
- A droning, lecturing voice
- The inability to keep a secret
- Phobias or fears (none at all are permitted – a parent must be brave.)
- Talkativity (especially in relation to principals, teachers, friend's parents or assorted potted plants.)
- Baby talk
- Abnormality of any kind including fashion sense, looks and personality in general
- Rudeness
- Cruelty
- Corny jokes
- An embarrassing lack of technological skills
- Terrible cooking skills

Scarlett

Enough is enough

Let me ask you something mum and dad. When your sibling got more than you, did you feel offended or left out? Since you both have siblings this applies to you both.

My brother has so much more than me. He has an Xbox, PS3, DSI, DS, Ipad, and he even has two laptops. He is 12 years of age. I'm not being spoilt, I just find it a little bit unfair that he gets so much more than me.

I honestly appreciate everything that you have ever gotten for me in my life, but come on, like I asked before, do you feel offended or left out when your siblings get more than you? Of course you would, it is only natural too, but it has come to a point where enough is enough.

When I ask for an item of clothing, the majority of time you would both always say yes, but when the item is over \$50 that is way too expensive and I can not buy it. But when it comes to buying these technical games or devices that are over \$100, you always buy them.

Another thing that makes me think you favour my brother a little bit more than me is report cards. When my brother gets an okay mark you tell him how good he has done, but when I get an okay mark you just tell me to try harder. Which doesn't improve my confidence at all. You tell my brother he has done a good job and that he has improved. That makes me feel really put down.

“When my brother gets an okay mark you tell him how good he has done, but when I get an okay mark you just tell me to try harder”

So mum and dad now that have heard how I feel, I do want you to know that you are amazing parents and you have done a lot for me, and I don't even think you realise you are doing what you are doing which is okay but I guess this can be a little wake up call.

Natalie

All the time in the world

"I've just got to put your brother to bed, sweetie, then I'll come to you." "Just finishing up with your sister's homework, I can be with you later." "I'm busy right now. We'll have all the time in the world once I've come back from your brother's school interview."

Sound familiar?

You might say that us firstborns are attention-craving drama queens, and maybe there is a bit of truth in that, but we aren't the instigators. Maybe if you remembered your first little angel you brought into the world, we would feel so much better.

We understand that the little ones are in constant need of care, but we are still people as well, and don't deserve to be forgotten or thrown away so easily. We need the affection, the consideration...

And can you not blame us for everything our younger siblings do?

If you're denying this, you don't even realise you're doing it, which is, in a way, worse. We are still humans, and sometimes you appear to forget this. We still need your guidance, praise, and most of all, attention.

Without realising, you are pitting us against our little brothers or sisters, by making them seem more important than us. And I am genuinely sure that is the last thing that you want to happen.

“You don't have all
the time in the world,
and we know that,
but help us, still”

You know those kids who stay out late at night, drinking and smoking? I can guarantee that 90% of them have a younger sibling or two, and are either neglected or feel so, or they have nobody paying enough attention to them to stop their antics.

Is that what you want us to become?

If not, then I have a solution for you.

While you have your hands full with the little ones, and we show you an assignment with A+ on it, take just a few moments to congratulate us. Those moments will, I assure you, not be wasted, because the flow of gratitude from us will be priceless. When we ask for a little help with homework we don't understand, take a few more of those moments to help us, which will result in boundless appreciation.

You don't have all the time in the world, and we know that, but help us, still.

Sahara

I don't have time to do the washing up

On the spectrum between being up all night studying and being up all night partying, I don't know what high school was like for you, but it has most definitely changed. I know it's been a while, but surely you remember being given homework. Surely you remember studying all night for a test. Surely you remember being up at 11:45pm, wading through piles upon piles of papers and notes, trying, and failing, to decipher your own handwriting.

Whether you have blocked out this memory or it really has been so many years you've forgotten, it is happening to me, and many others daily.

Given what I have just told you, how do you expect me to be able to do any house work? It is enough to send one loopy and drive one to drink chocolate. The Washing Up (a personal hatred of mine) is not going to help me pass History so why would you, as loving, caring parents, force me to do it the night before an exam I'm already sure to fail? Vacuuming The Carpet not only makes the dog bark and howl like the house is falling down, but it takes me away from Maths homework, which I'm already behind on. It just doesn't make sense to me and I'm sure, as an intelligent, caring and considerate people, it doesn't make sense to you either.

As a student in 2013 I can say we don't have time to clean as we are busy preparing ourselves for the big wide

“The Washing Up
(a personal hatred
of mine) is not going
to help me pass
History so why
would you force me
to do it the night
before an exam...?”

world, where we need to know about triangles, definite articles and magnesium.

Please stop asking us to do the impossible and just enjoy having a diligent, fit and sane young adult to talk to and spend time with (when they're not doing English homework, of course).

Milly

Are parents being too lazy with 'parenting'?

Children nowadays are spending too much time in front of the computer and T.V. and eating too much junk-food. Due to this and the lack of stable parenting, children can start to put on the weight and become less able to concentrate in class.

Sport and co-curricular activities are a great way for children to interact and get fit, but due to today's technologies this has become less so. Children would rather spend their time inside than out. But is it their fault? Parents aren't as strict anymore and aren't forcing their children to at least participate in a sport, also the lack of participation in class has dropped due to children now having a laptop and playing games during class time. The completion of homework is not at a substantial level due to children being easily distracted. Parents feel sorry for their children because of the everyday stresses of school and allow children to do what they want.

What is the benefit of playing video games and watching irrelevant television shows, when what they are really doing is brain-washing all children of knowledge gained at school. If children continuously want to play video games instead, what does that say about the style of parenting?

Some parents feel that because they had a strict and harsh childhood, why their children should have to go through the torture that they went through. But really what they are doing is

disadvantaging their child from the rest. Lack of focus and students not willing to study can result in students' not passing exams, dropping out of school, not getting a required OP and also not getting into their preferred course at University.

Children can become lazy or not focused on school work because they can learn from their parents, if the parents are lazy children, then observe and think, that if they are not putting the effort or not doing any physical activity why should they be bothered to participate in activities and complete homework. Also it has been found that because of this students are 'forgetting' (on purpose) their correct formal uniform and the required uniform for Health and Physical Education Lessons. Students are also known to skip periods within their timetable and leave the school grounds, during school hours.

Students have been found to be less focused and less disciplined, is it the result of today's careless parenting? Parents should consider how their parenting style is benefiting their children and how focused on school work they are because otherwise they would be disappointed if they don't succeed and do something in life.

Hannan

Why do our failures count for more than our successes?

We know you don't want us to get big-headed and all that other stuff but when we do achieve something good it would be nice if you could acknowledge it with more than a nod. We know you don't want us to get big-headed but we want you to be proud of us. Whenever we do something well, something that is a personal best, your first question how did everyone else go. Why can't you proud of us when we do the best we can do. Why are you only happy when we are the best? Parents, us kids are not going to be the best at everything we do, even if we want to be. We truly are sorry about it but it is a fact and it would be really nice if you saw that it is true.

Also, why do you compare us with our peers? Everyone has different talents and we are not going to do as well as them in some things. Instead of motivating us, this just makes us go into 'self-bashing mode' where we feel like everything we do is wrong. Just to make it worse, when we do do better than the people you compare us to it doesn't matter but when we do worse than them all hell breaks loose. Cut us some slack.

Another question that we kids have for you parents is: why do our failures count for more than our successes? When we do well in something, yeah, we do get congratulated but when we do badly you always go on to criticise us and make us feel like we are failing you.

You always go on and tell us about how much you have given up for us. We want

“Why can't you proud of us when we do the best we can do? Why are you only happy when we are the best?”

you to be happy but we are going to fail in life, at least once. We are sorry about it but it is the truth.

So parents we do want to make you proud of us but first it would be nice if you made your standards clearer and possible. When we reach these expectations please acknowledge this and congratulate us. We do want to make you proud.

Eshreena

Where's Santa?

The relationship between a parent and child is supposed to have a strong, meaningful and trustworthy relationship. So why did you tell me Santa was real? You crushed my dreams. You lied to me. I went to school with an aching hole in my heart, while every-one else was full of joy. You should not have lied to me. I thought we could trust each other, but you lied to my face.

'Twas the night before Christmas, twelve PM sharp I was staying up (like a child does on Christmas Eve) to catch Santa red-handed. I heard the rustle of the Christmas tree, and silently crept out of bed to the living room. I peeked around the corner... but to my surprise no Santa. Just you and mum stacking presents under the tree. This ruined my childhood.

I would have been fine with you just giving me presents every year, but instead you lied to my face for five years. Christmas is supposed to be a time of joy and new beginnings, but it is a lie. I believed in all the silly stories of Santa's sleigh and reindeer. It's ironic how a joyful event is a lie.

But it doesn't stop there. Parents lie about so many different things: Easter and the Tooth Fairy are both lies that children around the world celebrate every year. How could this happen to humanity? Our main celebrations revolve around lies!

“PS: Did you eat all the milk and cookies on Christmas Eve?”

So, parents just give it to us straight. Don't lie to us. Tell us the truth. We can take it.

Ps. Did you eat all the milk and cookies on Christmas Eve?

From Kids around the World

Calum

I actually appreciate my parents ways of 'parenting'

Girls and boys my age are always having problems with understanding their parents and are really frustrated because their parents won't allow them to go or do certain things. But I feel my parents really understand me and are always wanting to help me, and unlike other teenagers I really 'get' my parents.

I feel that I've been brought up well by my parents and have been taught about certain rules to follow or how I conduct myself on a daily basis. I support where my parents are coming from when they say to stay away from drugs and or things in relation to that, watch out for strangers, use manners and are constantly reminding me about common sense.

Although, when it comes to dying hair, or getting piercings, they don't support it or they just give me this whole lecture on why it isn't necessary, and if I was to name one thing that really frustrates me at the moment would be why they can't at least see my side of things or why it isn't such a bad thing to experiment a new look for example.

As I'm growing up I'm obviously wanting to go out with friends, get invited to parties etc. and I can tell that they are keeping up with all that. And they are always asking to take me and friends to places which is super cool for a parent. Something that I really admire in my parents has been their involvement in my activities in school and how they constantly show that they really care

“They believe in me so much and are willing to always help me out”

about my life and future. They are always reminding me that they are there to help me with any problems that I'm going through.

In the past couple of years I feel that my parents have really started to trust me. When it comes to school or taking care of someone or something they really trust me. I find that that they believe in me so much and are willing to always help me out.

So, overall, having a close relationship between parents and children really is a must. Coming from a teenager's perspective, letting kids know that you're always there for them no matter what or trusting each other really brings a family closer together and it really makes the child feel responsible and independent.

Yianna

I wish

Have you ever looked at another child and thought 'I wish I had a son/daughter just like that'? Maybe you have even voiced that opinion aloud, to your partner or even worse, your own child. I am sure many of, if not all of you, are guilty of this – especially if the child is three and is having a tantrum in the supermarket when an angel of a toddler goes past smiling happily with his or her parents cooing at the toddler. I mean, sure, parents always have to have some moments when your temper can run away from you, but as the child grows up and starts to understand and remember what actually comes out of your mouth, things can start to go downhill.

Sooner or later that wish goes from 'I want a son/daughter just like that' to 'I want no son/daughter and that's that'. Children have a remarkable ability to process and remember unimportant information (I know this from experience, and I'm sure you parents will remember that distant memory). Relationships can be severed, and self-esteem can reach rock bottom when accidental phrases slip out in the heat of the moment. Kids remember these words, even if their parents forget them the next day and this can either result in withdrawing from the activities around them or getting into trouble just so their parents can notice *them* and not the perfect daughter from the park.

For example, I remember a time from primary school where I got punished for somebody else's mischief. The

“Kids remember
these words, even if
their parents forget”

teacher went berserk and ordered the child to stand outside although the kid was a straight A student. Later on when the teacher went on a holiday and returned from the trip, I remember her standing back while the other students ran up and welcomed the teacher back. This re-enforces the point that kids are sensitive to what adults say, and it can change their behaviour.

I guess what I have been ranting on about is that your child doesn't really know how they are expected to behave. When your child does something wrong – which I am sure they are going to do, often – don't just tell them off or compare them to someone else's devil (out loud), but explain what they did wrong and how they should behave next time, should it happen again. This often solves the problem, and maybe next time in the supermarket it's your child that is the angel as you coo happily to your daughter/son's face.

Sometimes words *do* speak louder than actions, or in this case, a telling off.

Cissy

Parents shouldn't have unreasonable expectations for their children

Dear Mum/Dad,

I would like to tell you that the pressure you have placed on me has made me confused. I am confused about where my future lies, what I should become, and I don't know who I am anymore.

Remember that day mum and dad, when you had an argument about me and the pressures I'm facing. Mum you were telling dad to stop pressuring me to be perfect at everything. Perfect at school, son, sport, dancer, reader and even perfect in a future career that I don't even know about.

I'm only 14-years-old. I enjoy skateboarding, hanging out with friends, dancing with my dance club members,

and all the things young boys like me enjoy doing.

Mum and dad, there is nothing wrong with me doing these things. They keep me happy and that's the most important thing. The future will always be unclear, but I know that I'll grow up to be a man that you will be proud of. I know you're doing this in my best interest, I'll do my best to live up to your expectations.

Don't worry!

Sincerely: Spinner

Spinner (name changed) is a 14-year-old newly settled refugee. This took him an hour to write, with only minimal support from a volunteer. It was retyped exactly as it was handwritten.



Not doing chores shouldn't result in punishment

It just might be my mum, but my mum always seems so over dramatic when it comes to me not doing the dishes it seems that I am "lazy" and "careless" sometimes the lazy thing is true but really who wants to stand on the side and have to dry the dishes?

Some days I have a load of homework or I just want to continue a phone call with a close friend not have to stand there while I have to dry dishes and have to put effort into having a conversation with my mum it gets awkward then she goes and turns on her hits of the 80's on the radio and begins to dance and sing along it's quite terrifying but back to the main point my mum seems to be overly

dramatic when it comes to me saying "I can't be bothered" or "tomorrow" turns into "you don't appreciate or care for me" I do it's just the dishes! It doesn't mean I don't care or I don't appreciate the stuff you do for me I just want to go back to the computer in my bed and just chat to people on Facebook, watch a movie or just go on Skype and have a group call with mates, is that so hard to understand?

But in all seriousness parents just need to calm down and not make assumptions that kids "don't care" or "don't appreciate" anything if they don't do one chore.

Lara

We want trust and space

Parents. I don't think that keeping us away from our friends is the best thing for us, see sometimes we do intend to get on your nerves but we do need space and also to be trusted to hang out with friends and also we get in trouble for asking if we can go out.

Firstly you guys get angry at us for nothing I mean you guys get angry at us for just sitting in our room or just sitting on our computer, but it's not our fault we are not socialising it's you're guys fault because you said no.

Secondly we need our own space, we can't stay at home and keep away from our friends, sometimes we need to talk

to some other people for a bit about what happens at home or if we were having trouble with something.

Lastly we sometimes feel that we are not trusted to hang out with our friends, but really I mean what are we possibly capable of doing, it's not like we can get drugs and alcohol. Also from school we do learn about the dangers in the world so we would have an open mind about when we go out.

So basically we are not asking for much we are just asking if you parents can give some trust and space without getting yelled at.

Qurshill

Anti-fantasy blocks reality!

Parents might think that anti-fantasy, by this I mean no anime, no comic, no space-travelling superheros, will improve their children in their studies therefore anti-fantasy will be good for reality.

However, I believe that parents are wrong with this assumption is missing evidence to be identified as a true statement.

To begin with, imagining themselves to be characters that only exist in fantasy will improve a child's imagination. As part of childhood we all experienced how it feels like to be someone that has ability which would never be found in reality. It feels bad and sad to be teased by people just because we want to be someone.

In addition, parents have nasty options on fantasy. I remember when I was five pretending to be a warrior and my mum stopped me just because she doesn't believe it. I lost my confidence and happiness for a long time.

Even now, I'm in high school and I'm still imagining things. I imagine myself to be a captain of a basketball team or a musician, or just a normal human being doing something I would never dare to do.

But my parents are still against it. I still don't have enough confidence to stand out in front of people.

“I'm in high school
and I'm still
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being doing
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never dare to do”

Anti-fantasy do block reality in so many ways. Therefore I suggest parents to think next time before they scream and shout at their child and blocks and another fantasy world.

Jiruo

All I want to say is thank you

For once instead of moaning and groaning and complaining about how much parents don't understand and are terrible, I am here to take the time to thank you parents for all the things you have done for us. I just want you to know that we really do appreciate and see all that you do. I know we are sometimes not very sympathetic and can be downright brats but please know that we really do care. We are really and truly thankful for all you do; all the small things that make life that little bit better.

Parents have always been our role models and we try so very hard to please you and to be your little angels. You should know how utterly terrible we feel when we glimpse the occasional look of disappointment in your eyes. Know how rotten we feel when we don't reach your expectations. It really does pain us that we sometimes just can't be the child you want us to be. But yet with all our errors and faults you still love us and care for us. You are still there for us when we feel hurt and when we feel that the world is against us. You have and are always there for us. These and so many other things are what I thank you parents for.

Now at this stage I'd like to personally thank my mother and father for "everything" they have done for me especially all the sacrifices they have made so that my brother and I can live a happy, peaceful and wonderful life.

I know I could never do them justice in this little entry but I'd like to at least

thank them for the one thing that has impacted my life and theirs the greatest. And that is moving to Australia.

I was born in Taiwan but I have lived in Australia for nearly my whole life and I have loved every bit of it. But for my parents, I know this move was probably one of the hardest things they'd done in their life. I know that my parents have had to leave their family and friends, their jobs and futures careers so that I could live in Australia. I know that my parents have had to learn to live in a new place in which they are unfamiliar with and have had to learn a new language for me. I sometimes see the pain and longing in their faces, especially my mother when she thinks of home – her real home. I know she must have been thinking about her mother and her sister and brothers and how she wished she could be there too. It really does hurt me to see her that way. It is also sometimes really hard for me to understand because our lives are so different. Maybe that is why I feel I need to please them. Why I feel need to make up for the things they have given up on for me.

I don't know how many times I've already said thank you and how many more I must say but all I want to say right now is THANK YOU PARENTS!

Jennifer

Parents putting kids under the pump

Sometimes we wonder if our parents were ever teens. If they were, they must have completely forgotten because they sure don't show any understanding of how we feel. We do love our parents and are grateful of how they care for us and how they've brought us up, but we do think that our parents just don't understand; the pressure we are put under, the amount of work we have to do and even behaviour and attitude expectations. Sometimes, we just think they expect too much.

We try hard at school. We play sports to keep fit and get involved in extracurricular activities. We commit to our relationships and friendships and even get part time jobs, but we still feel like our parents expect more! We think they sometimes think that we're never busy, that we don't need to spend all afternoon on our science assignment or that we really didn't need that extra half an hour to work on our English essay. They just don't trust us to make our own decisions when all we really need is some space to be independent.

The teenage years of a person are filled with stress, friendships, relationships, raging hormones (that account for the mood swings!) love, passion an extreme amount of homework and even fear. To us, getting through high school is a big enough task without our parents' high expectations on top of that! We think it's fair enough that our parents are concerned about us, our education and our wellbeing, but shouldn't we be able

“High parental expectations just add to the pressure”

to make our own choices and decisions about some parts of our lives and how we deal and cope with things?

We don't want our parents to stop caring, that's the last thing we want, but we do think that it's important that we can become more individual, and be able to make some of our own choices and decisions. Our lives as teenagers are already busy enough, and high parental expectations just add to the pressure and make us feel more stressed.

Parents, please don't stop caring, we aren't trying to exclude you from our lives, just realise that we need our space to develop and grow as individuals and that no-one can do everything right or be happy 100% of the time.

Taylor

He started it!

I'm not perfect. And I know that as the eldest child I'm expected to be ... but I think that I can say on behalf of all older teenage siblings that even though we are more mature, responsible, and 'should know better', we're not always going to politely ask our younger sibling who is violently attacking our faces with a Nerf gun to stop.

I'm sorry, but it's not going to happen.

And if my little brother steals my diary, spills tomato sauce on my just-finished assignment or informs me that I have a rat face, then I will not, under any circumstances, walk away and be the 'bigger person'. I will prove to him that I really am the bigger person, maybe with a few pinches on his arm or a nice big shove.

And that's when the injustice plays out. Because it's at that point that you walk in, when my younger, melodramatic sibling is on the floor bawling his eyes out and accusing me of assault. When in fact I was just making things right, and distributing the deserved punishment for his criminal (okay, maybe not criminal but extremely aggravating) acts.

The following conversation usually goes exactly like this. Every single time.

'April, is it true that you pushed him?'

'But muuuuuuum I had to! He was going to rip the whole bloody book in half!'



'So you resorted to violence ?'

'Yes but-'

'April. How old are you?'

'14.'

'And how old is Le-oule?'

'6.'

And then you pick him up, and carry him out to make sure the little devil is 'feeling okay'. Might I just remind you that it was HIM not ME that initiated the argument and I was simply doing what you always tell me to do – end it. Quickly and simply. As the older sibling you also tell me that in those situations I should just walk away, tell him to stop or suggest another activity. Been there. Done that. Doesn't work. I am an energetic, independent teenager with very little time to complete homework and assignments, so in moments of stress, if my little brother does something to PURPOSELY annoy me, I will snap. And there is no age limit to that.

April-Rose

“I am an energetic,
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I do appreciate your love and care for me

Mums. Dads. I have words but I just don't have courage. I know it's hard to make a living for a family but being a teenager there are ups and downs in our lives too. I may sometimes express my anger and frustration out on you but this is not because I hate you, but it is because I have no one else to express my anger on. Keeping problems in my life in my heart and not being able to express it to anyone hurts a lot. Sometimes I even have a slight feeling that no one understands and no one really cares. But please keep in mind that this is not your fault, it's not anyone's fault. We fight because of frustration not hate, frustration on my behalf includes your misunderstanding on the fact that watching films about drugs, smoking, sex and drinking doesn't mean that I'm doing it myself.

Just because we aren't talking as much as we did before yet we are fighting more doesn't mean my heart doesn't shatter when I see you cry and it doesn't mean that I don't regret the actions and words against you when I'm angry. Being Chinese, you give us red pockets every Chinese New Year. Although we mainly only care about how much money you give us, I know that the true contents of these red packets aren't just money. It contains love and the best wishes of a year filled with joy and prosperity and I know this because the look of your eyes when you hand us the red pocket is one of caring, warmth and love. But for now, the money is most important!

When I'm about to hang up on your call, I don't say I love you or anything like that because as a family we don't need to say things like that for we can feel it and we know it. Also I don't say it mainly because it's kind of embarrassing especially if my friends and peers are around! You may complain that I'm addicted to my phone, laptop and TV but look on the bright side; at least I'm not addicted to drugs, alcohol and smoking. You can actually count yourselves lucky! I also know that my studies are important but can you please not make every single topic I talk to you about relate to my studies? At the end of the day your last say is "You've got to try harder with your studies!" but to tell the truth, who doesn't try hard? Who wants to fail? No one. I have always tried my best and I would greatly appreciate it if you acknowledge my hard work and effort that I put into my studies.

So these are a few things that I have to throw at you but I guess as parents your concern of us is relevant, but just please don't go overboard! By the way, please don't ever tell me to buy pads from the supermarkets again! The people at the checkouts give me funny looks and its double awkward if it was a dude at the checkout! But that's probably about it!

Please keep in mind though, I do appreciate your love and care for me all these years, I really do! Or do I? No, I'm joking I do!

Alison

The lies behind the truth

Most parents have lied to their kids at least once. Usually, it's to encourage or to boost our self-esteem: "You are the smartest person in the whole world." While they may seem like harmless little lies, they build up to something dangerous that could fall and destroy the child at any time. They are led to believe that they are the smartest person, the prettiest girl, the best child in the universe. And what happens when they find out the truth? It will come as a crushing blow. All their built-up confidence crumbles in a second. They are angry, hurt and confused. Their parents had lied to them.

There once was a girl who grew up with her parent's lies about her appearance - "You're very beautiful, believe me. I've never seen a prettier girl in my life." Her parents managed to keep up the pretence until she turned 15. Then it all came apart when she signed up for a beauty contest. That was when she overheard two of the judges sitting behind her talking about her: "Is she seriously going to sign up with her dough ball of a face..." They laughed at her, not bothering to keep their voices down. Humiliated and broken, she returned home and demanded her parents to tell her why she'd been lied to all these years. Bewildered and desperate, they could not comfort their beloved daughter or mend her broken pride. Slowly, she disintegrated and her spirit crumbled away to nothingness. Everything she thought she had, the one thing she was proud of in herself, was

“They are led to believe that they are the smartest person, the prettiest girl, the best child ... what happens when they find out the truth?”

gone, just like that, in a few seconds. She tried to commit suicide. Though she was prevented from doing it and they managed to save her body, they couldn't save her spirit. She wanted to *die*.

While this is an extreme case of the matter, it's possible. Parents who pump up their child's confidence will suffer the consequences when they see their child come home one day, depressed and angry, their ballooning confidence punctured by a bully's cruel shard of abuse. Kids like that live behind a fragile wall their parents struggle to keep erect, behind which the truth lurks, waiting to shatter that wall.

Parents cannot always protect their children. What would you do when they

grow up, go out and meet the truth of the world head-on, alone and unprotected? Bullies in this time are very common. All it takes is for your daughter or son to bump into one of them. Then, there is no going back. No matter what you tell them now, their wounded pride and trust would not accept it.

Wouldn't it be better to have your child know the truth from the start and know to accept it, than to be shocked by it when it hits them hard, right in the face?

Wouldn't it be so much better for your daughter or son to appreciate and be

confident in what they already have, instead of something fake that they don't?

The fragile imaginary fairytale world that parents create for their kids does not help. Instead, once the delicate walls are down, we're left vulnerable, bare and naked to assaults from the not-so-perfect reality. That's why parents should never, *ever* lie to their kids about what makes them special in who they are. Because every one of us is extraordinary and different in our own way, and we need to know that, not something made up.

Anne

Parents shouldn't overthink things

I think parents shouldn't overthink things because that causes them lots of stress and they get very frustrated. I know sometimes my parents can get stressed over my problems, even though I'm relaxed and ready to sort it out. I know that if you asked almost any parent they'd say that it was because they 'loved their child' or that 'you'll thank me later', but the reality of it is that parents overthink things and then get stressed.

This type of thing happens a lot in other situations like, going out to parties, or being away from home. It's situations like these that are the core of the problem. And even if there is something to be worried about, sometimes kids

don't need parents *to be worried for them*.

This is why parents shouldn't overthink things and sometimes just let things be, instead of getting stressed and worked up about things when all we want is to handle the situation without making a big deal of it. But then parents start thinking a bit too much, get worried and stressed and then it's a problem.

Of course, it's not necessarily the parent's fault; no it's just a natural reaction and that's okay. However, it's still a bad habit.

Tobi

This is who I am

Hello to all you people I am an African proud boy

When I was a little boy I never knew that Australia was a country and I love Africa so much I would live there for ever. Oh and my name is Dado and I am 12 years old. When I was 5 I always wanted to go to Australia so it must have been my lucky day. When I went to Australia I was scared to every person I knew at school well it was awesome to be there with them. The worst thing I had to do was to go to a different school like every school I know or friends I had leave them and move on then I come to a school there were good people. I had to make new friends again but it wasn't that hard you just had to act cool.

I am now in year seven and it's pretty easy with the work and I am pretty good at sport.

I used to have a good friend but I moved house, my friends are my dad and mum. They are pretty cool. I love the way they love me so much and I don't really hate them at all.

Let's talk about the future - well I'll go to college and high school of course. I might get a job and a wife and my children, well my brothers made a deal with our dad that we would raise money for dad and mum. Why? To build a future house for them near to me or my brothers and sisters.

Dado

Dado is a 12-year-old newly settled refugee.

“I used to have a good friend but I moved house.

My friends are my dad and mum. They are pretty cool”

Easygoing doesn't mean easily led

Just because we come home with scowls on our faces and stomp to our rooms before slamming the door, doesn't mean that we are being bullied or teased at school. A lot of parents seem to think that if their child is unhappy that it is through no fault of their own. Instead, they often decide to blame the attitude of their teenage children on their friends, which in most cases is completely wrong. Don't get me wrong: I do think that parents should care about how their child is being treated at school. But not every bad mood is a result of peer pressure or bullying.

Being tired and a little grumpy after school isn't unusual for me, and unfortunately it isn't unusual of my parents to say, "Just because you had a fight with your friends, doesn't mean you need to take it out on your family!" Sometimes it's as though they blame my friends for everything, from my moody silences, to my enthusiasm to take up new sports.

I thought parents were supposed to encourage new endeavours, not question the motives behind your decision. For example, when I tell my mother that I've decided to take up a new sport, she immediately asks me whether I really want to do it, or whether I am only trying it because my friends are. It's as though parents believe that we cannot think for ourselves and will only do things to look 'cool' or 'sporty' in front of our friends. Sure, most people would be more inclined to

try something new if their friends did too, but it's sports and hobbies we're talking about here, not alcohol and drugs. The same thing happens if I decide I want to buy new shoes or a dress to wear when I'm out with my friends. Immediately my parents seem to jump to the conclusion that someone has been teasing me about how I look and what I'm wearing, as though the only thing that influences my decisions is peer pressure.

As a person I know I am more of a 'sheep', or a follower. I do do things based on what other people think, however in the end it is always my decision. I understand that my parents might be a bit worried about how easy going I am, but being overprotective can be just as bad as not caring enough. It always seems to be my friends who are at fault for everything. Whether I'm in a bit of a fluster, or just simply excited to try something new, my parents are there every step of the way to question my motives. All I ask is that parents give teenagers credit on their decisions in life, rather than basing their judgements on everything they hear about peer pressure and bullying. Yes, teenagers often prefer to act as a group, but most teenagers know how to decide for themselves and need parents to let them do that.

Kate

The pressure on teenagers

Today teenagers have a lot of pressure on them. The pressure to have the right clothes, the right hair, the right bag, and the constant stress of exams, assignments and sport. There is the pressure and expectation to have good friends, to be on speaking terms with your family, to be nice to everyone, and to know the names of the four hundred kids in your grade. Being a teenager is stressful.

So, sometimes, when you yell down the hallway at us to come stack the dishwasher and we are not exactly overjoyed it is not because we are being lazy but because our brains are still buzzing from trying to memorise the 21 different maths formulas that we need for tomorrow's exam or it is because we are so physically and mentally exhausted from an early morning cross country run, six hours of school and afternoon rowing session that even sitting at a desk doing homework is causing us to almost pass out.

And when you mention that our family is having a bonding session this week and we groan it is because you didn't stop to think, wait, has my daughter got five assessment pieces next week? Or does my daughter need every spare minute she can get to practise for basketball trials this week? Sometimes adding extra things into our already extremely busy lifestyle will result in us not being in the best of moods.

While a lot of pressure comes from you there is also an enormous amount

coming from our friends. The pressure to spend our time with them, to text them, to call them and to wear the clothes and hairstyles they approve of. The pressure from our friends can also be mean; it is the kind of pressure that leaves you crying alone if you don't manage to get it right. While your family will always be there for you, your friends are under no such contract and if you don't live up to their standards then they can easily find a newer, shiner and nicer version to replace you.

School and the future are the things that scare us the most. You assume that we will graduate top of our grade doing some miraculous good in the world afterwards and the look on your face when we fall short of these expectations is enough to push anyone over the edge. Whether it is a bad exam result or a late assignment, these are the things that cause the most stress. Thoughts of what we want to do after school and how many A's we will get on our report card are never far away and it is those thoughts that leave us lying in our beds, unable to get to sleep until the early hours of the morning.

Overall, the combined pressure of our family, friends, future and school work can cause anybody to stress, so sometimes all we need is a break from kitchen duty to get us back on track.

Ruby Rose

Are we ever going to be good enough?

Teenagers. What vile thoughts come to your head with the word? A drug-dealing, short-skirt wearing girl? A gum-chewing, virginity-taking boy? A glue-sniffing, weed-smoking, obnoxious bunch of self-obsessed know-it-all's? No. The truth is most of our egos have been battered and bruised by the knuckles of stereotypes that continue to turn our shameful faces deep shades of blue, red and purple.

We teenagers are at a place where we are trying to find the equilibrium between peace and finding ourselves – who we are and why we are. In this moment, we're stretched towards two directions – in one way, we're stretched deep into the depths and outreaches of the universe, winding around every star and passing planets, so to speak, and trying to reach a place where we feel happy. With that same idea, we are going within ourselves and trying to locate a place where we can gently take a flight down like a feather and land on placid ground where we can find who we are, what our purpose is and what life is and, from that feather, make wings and take flight.

To you, parents, it must seem like years since that has happened to you and maybe you can no longer empathize but for us teenagers, in this moment, it is everything. It doesn't help that there are already false assumptions, like that we all take drugs, drink alcohol and engage in pre-marital sex, that adults seem to account for every single teenager on this

“Teenagers ... a drug-dealing, short-skirt wearing girl?

A gum-chewing, virginity-taking boy?

A glue-sniffing, weed-smoking, obnoxious bunch of self-obsessed know-it-alls?”

planet. When you start to push a tablet of falsehoods down our throats, eventually we'll swallow it however hard we fight it. We don't believe that we are all in the darkened shadow of the perfect person – meaning that teenagers are most definitely not the rotten end of humanity just because we are teenagers – and we are not the bratty kids that movies, TV shows and the general media paint us out to be but if you keep feeding us that image we'll start thinking that that's our reflection instead of an evil doppelganger.

Most of us aren't like our stereotypes. We're trying to find our utopia while juggling expectations that may exceed our capabilities. We are wondering whether we're ever going to be good enough for the world that hates us. Parents, you have to realise that there is no one fighting for teenagers. Though there may be campaigns for civil rights and persuasion of accepting gay people, there is no one fighting for teenagers. In that turmoil, we are caught and swept away. If we don't rebel and fight for ourselves, then there will be no one protecting us.

So, before jumping to conclusions, try to understand us. We're simple creatures with simple minds – but our actions are the results of all the complex thoughts that depress us.

And, hey. Parents, have you ever thought that what your kid does may not be his or her fault? Have you ever considered

the fact that we learn from our elders? That we learn from YOU? Think about it: you are our greatest influence, from the moment of our birth to death. Your influence reigns on us more than you realise. You have to make your influence good otherwise... What about us?

So, parents, before you judge us, try to understand. We are stretched to our limits and sometimes we snap and break. We cope by absurd means but we do so in a way that, maybe, you will never understand. We're not like our stereotypes, rather the opposite. We're quite sly, cunning and aspire to obtain greater things. We learn from everybody – even you, parents. So, before you go blaming us, look at yourself a great deal closer and you will see the pock marks of hypocrisy scarring your shameful visages.

And, yes. Even after all this ranting, we will always respect you because you will always be the mast be cling to when the winds are too rough and our fabric shake in them. Remember: we will always love you, parents, but more so if you understand what we do and why we do so.

Nuha

The “bad” friend

My parents never let me out of the house to hang around with a particular friend because they believe they are a bad influence to me.

I don't understand why I can't hang out with this friend, I understand that she is a bad influence to me and wants to hang around with all these bad ass guys and go to all these music festivals/raves but I have other friends I can hang out with who would just want to hang around with all girls and watch a movie or go shopping.

Whenever I want to hang around with this friend, I have to lie to my parents and say I'm going out with "the good friends".

I wish I didn't have to lie to them, but I'm a teenager and I want to be crazy and wild like any other. My parents should just accept the fact that their little girl has grown up.

Samantha

“Whenever I want to hang around with this friend, I have to lie to my parents and say I'm going out with "the good friends”

Stereotypes about teenagers are harsh and untrue

Not only are the stereotypes about teenagers harsh and untrue, they can also have a harmful and negative impact on the generation of teenagers today. Most of the stereotypes about my generation portray us in a negative way, such as that they are lazy, egocentric, and rebellious, just like the teenagers portrayed in the movies. These generalisations can have social impacts on teenagers, as well as causing them to have a bad attitude.

Stereotypes about teenagers come into three categories: they have a bad attitude, they don't work hard, and they only care about trivial things such as beauty and possession. People also believe that teenagers who are beautiful are not very intelligent, which can cause people to believe that they have to be dumb. I know many beautiful people who are incredibly intelligent.

Just because a dodgy teen has decided to do something idiotic, it doesn't mean that every other teenager in the world has to be prohibited from ever going to that place again. In the news there are always stories of teenagers doing stupid things. Facebook parties gone wrong, planking in dangerous places, and binge drinking are just some of the many things that some teenagers get up to. Although many adults believe this, most teenagers would not even *dream* of doing those kinds of things. I know for a fact that nearly all parents wouldn't dream of their children doing this either and these thoughts can cause all sorts of

problems for the lives of my generation. For example, my parents allow me to go to most places with my friends; however some activities are just not going to happen. This is because although I am probably not going to get up to anything unruly, my parents don't want me going somewhere that other teenagers have misbehaved.

As I said before, most of the stereotypes about teenagers portray the movie star-like ditzy drama queen. To many teenagers, this is exactly what they want: getting all the boys because they have blonde hair, giggle a lot, and pretend to be stupid. After all, who wouldn't want to be like a movie star? Who wouldn't want to be 'cool'? However, this attitude can have a negative chain reaction. The wannabe teenagers try to be like a living stereotype. This can cause them to stop working hard, and their grades fall, which can cause mental health issues, such as depression and anxiety.

Teenagers can also get into bigger problems than they can handle. They can get into fights, in trouble with their school, into car accidents. I'm sure that nobody would want to sacrifice their life for their popularity; however this is basically what they are doing.

Imogen

Technology

We are old enough to control ourselves

Parents have this hatred toward this thing called 'internet'. I really have no idea why?! They think all we do is stay on Facebook and YouTube 24/7, but why would you parents think like that? People message us and upload photos of us, but it really doesn't mean we would reply or like the photo! They had no rights to believe we are ruining our live. It's our live and we have the right to do want ever we want to it!!

Internet is great software to learn and to entertain. There is Wikipedia (though it's not always accurate) and government websites that can do no harm! There are also questions and answer websites like yahoo and wiki answer, there are all beneficial websites which can only do you goods. Of course there are inappropriate websites that contains inappropriate things *cough cough* we are smart enough to avoid them, why would we want to go near those websites when we have Tumblr?!

And also parents believe we would download viruses and destroy the \$2000 Mac they just brought, we if there is a disease there will always be a cure. There are effective firewalls and anti-virus programs we can download for free. They are effective and easy to use. We are born with computers around us; we can operate them since we are surrounded by them when we are young. It's not fair that adults get to use computers and internet while we can only sit there and watch.

We are the child of the next generation. We should be able to use computers freely. But no. we are restricted in every way. I don't get why adults can go on Facebook or YouTube while they are at work and we can't even go on those at home because we have 'homework' which we already finished. Adults use 'homework' as an excuse to cut us from social life. If we have already finished all of our homework then I don't see why we can't relax and go on Facebook, YouTube or Tumblr for a while.

I know parents care about us and want us to have a good future, but we are more than capable to control ourselves. We are teenagers – just a few more years to adulthood, so why do you still treat us like a child while expecting us to behave like an adult?! It's one or the other!! We are just like adults so why can't parents trust us like one? We have OUR future in OUR hands, NOT in our PARENTS' hands. We decide what we should do to our life. I wish one day parents will listen to our voice and actually do what we ask them to do (nicely ofc) and actually let us use the internet however we like because we are old enough to control ourselves.

Janney

The computer is not where my brain goes to die

Whenever I use a computer you glower at me and start raving on about how when you were a kid you went out and played in the sunshine with a horde of giggling friends and had fun. You use the argument that my brain will shrink and my eyes will go square and my life will flash before my eyes before I can really experience it.

You do not realise that life has changed over the past half century. Mobile phones no longer give us cancer and there are no open grassy fields in which to play. You have kept your old ideals and eschew any modern way of living. Your blatant obliviousness results in ill-informed decisions that make us teenagers, the more tech savvy generation, fume at how unfair these decisions are. If you put in an effort to

truly understand what was happening online you could make much more informed decisions.

Not too long ago I was completing a small section of geography homework when you (my mother) began ranting about how as a kid you went and played outside and about how it is unhealthy sitting at a computer 24/7. This repetitive and circular argument only angered me as ten minutes previously I was chastised over having not previously completed my homework. This argument could have been prevented if you had a more in-depth knowledge on what I was doing. Contrary to popular belief when the majority of teenagers are on social media they do not spend their time fan-girling over their favourite celebrities or bullying people. They are communicating



with their friends, organising parties and asking questions about their homework. This interaction betters their social lives and keeps them up to date on upcoming social events. Depriving a teenager of social media deprives them of a modern social medium in which they can express themselves and interact with friends. This can only be understood if you have experienced this type of social interaction before and therefore almost impossible to understand for most of the older generations of the parenting body.

Games are another thing that bug parents. When the term computer games is mentioned, scenes of endless slaughter and gore are brought to mind. This is frankly untrue for a wide variety of games. The truth is that games are like movies. There are horror games, action games, fantasy games and romance games just like many movies. The only difference is games are more artistic and are heavily analysed for the quality of their graphics and depth of their storyline. Playing a computer game is like examining a painting or watching a movie. First you pick the genre and then find a game you like the look of. Once you are playing the game the first thing you look at is the quality of the graphics. Back in your day all you had was the one tonne monstrosity that is Pacman and other such games with pixels the size of the pad on my little finger. Now we have vast digital vistas, which are on occasion confused with real life panoramas. Confusing a game with just another excuse to stay inside and be unsociable

“Depriving a teenager of social media deprives them of a modern social medium in which they can express themselves and interact with friends”

is like saying that art should be reserved for special occasions.

So, my mother, my father. The computer is not a place where my brain goes to die. Instead it is a new medium in which I can express myself and learn about others.

Robert

Stop nagging us, we get it!

Dear worried parents, I understand the issue of the use of social media has bothered you for years but it is really not as bad as you think. I think there are two main parts to social networking that bothers parents the most. The first is security and the second is spending too much time online. The fact is, only a minority of users are irresponsible while on a social networking sites, the other majority of users are stereotyped under that minority. Your child is most probably not in that minority.

Students are warned continuously about cyber bullying and privacy at school. During my 9 years of schooling so far, I have sat through at least 5 presentations about being cautious when online and looking at the privacy settings thoroughly before going on. So your child or children are probably better informed than you think they are. Have faith in your son or daughter; believe that they are responsible while on a social networking websites. As your child gets older, they will become more mature and aware of things such as identity theft. If you nag at them constantly they may become annoyed and think you are working against them instead of trying to protect them. I know from my own experience it can be weary for both sides. So try to work with them and take in their suggestions.

I understand that another big part of social networking is wasting valuable time on a social networking site. Social networking can be addictive; once you

go on you can't help but talk to this person or have a look at what this person said, and the next thing you know it's been three hours. By spending so much time online there is less time for other things such as spending time with family and schoolwork. Being a teenager, I know it is hard to organise your time in most efficient way possible so it is easy to lose track of time.

Despite the fact that teenagers have been warned and are becoming adults, it is still a good idea to make sure they are not spending too much time on-line and also make sure they are ok. One way, to control the amount of time spent online, is by creating a timetable or list of priorities with your child. For example, you could say, "Social networking for 30 minutes, then you have to do your homework."

In conclusion, most social media users are honest but your children must be careful not to talk to strangers. To solve the problem of wasting too much time online a timetable can be constructed by you and your son or daughter together. Hopefully these ideas will assist you in managing your child's on-line time and the nagging will stop!

Angel

Social media and its effects on students

Spiteful messages, inerasable posts, harsh consequences for childish mistakes and pointless, time wasting websites.

This is what comes to the mind of many parents when words such as 'Facebook', 'Twitter' and 'Skype' are mentioned but this is most certainly not the case. Social media can be greatly beneficial to a student's life as it provides a database of infinite knowledge, opinions and information that was previously unavailable. Social media can also empower students by providing a way for them to express their talents, beliefs and opinions as well as allowing them to make changes in their society which would have earlier been impossible.

Thirdly, social media helps to lessen and in some cases close the communication gap between people around the world as it allows anybody with access to the internet to communicate as if they right there together with no regards to where they live, whether it be a street away or a continent away. Social media is greatly beneficial to students no matter the age and opposed to popular belief does not lessen or distract from a student's academic and social life.

Social media is defined by oxford dictionaries as 'websites and applications that enable users to create and share content or to participate in social networking' and it is obvious that one of the main functions of it is to enable the distribution of knowledge, opinions and news. Parents are often opposed to this form of learning as for they have never before encountered it

and are not familiar enough to feel comfortable using it. All social media offers students new knowledge regarding any subject possible and although it is very different from the restricted forms of information that many parents received, the new resources and opinions provided by sources from around the world help students gain knowledge and understanding of events without being influenced by where they are or any other factor. Social media is a great source of learning for students and it not only provides knowledge and opinions that students would not otherwise be able to access but it also helps students in more personal ways.

Social media allows people to express their talents, individuality and gives them opportunities to have a say in the way that their society works. By giving students a place to share their achievements, videos, pictures and opinions, it also gives them a way to take action and push for changes in society. This option has never before been present for the public and many parents are again uncomfortable with social media because of its ability to give their children such a say in the decisions. This presents an excellent opportunity for students' to express themselves and show their individuality which, in today's society, is a gift. With this ability also come responsibility and some parents say that we as their children are not old enough to make such choices. They then go on to say that we should take more responsibility, which path do they want

us to take? Social media presents a great opportunity for students to voice themselves and their beliefs and also gives students a sense of responsibility.

Social Media's most predominant use is to communicate. By using this form of media anybody, anywhere can contact family, friends and even strangers. People no longer have to worry about falling out of contact as social media lets people communicate like they are in the same room. Websites like Skype let you chat face to face with friends and family and sites like omegle even allow you to meet strangers and other sites like Facebook allow you to share memories and pictures. This new age of communicate can be alarming to some parents but the safety precautions taken by these websites to ensure the safety of their users completely covers any issue that a parent might have. Social media is a great way of communicating with anybody, whether they are friends from school or family from foreign countries.

This new form of knowledge, communication and self-expression greatly helps children in many ways. There are many more ways that social media has positive impacts on children's lives but there are 3 main impacts. Firstly there is the offering of a wider and deeper pool of knowledge for children to take their pick of, any subject from any point of view and they have it there, at their fingertips. Secondly, social media offers children the ability to express their idea and beliefs as well as giving them

“Social media presents a great opportunity for students to voice themselves and their beliefs and also gives students a sense of responsibility”

the opportunity to impact on the workings of their society and finally, it helps breach the communication gap formed by many miles of land or sea. Social media has, for many years improved our society and for us as students it greatly benefits our lives both socially and academically.

India

Cyber-bullying

I'm writing about an issue I feel very strongly about: cyber-bullying. I believe that cyber-bullying is among the cruelest ways to make someone feel unwanted, alone and inferior.

Cyber-bullying is bullying over the internet, including Facebook, email, Twitter, Myspace, Tumblr, blogs, websites, or calling/texting cruel or mean things. It is most common among young adults in high school.

It may occur for any number of reasons. The bullies/ bully themselves might be bullied at home, and pick on others to help their own pain. Sometimes they are jealous of the victim's ability to do something. Maybe the victim has done something bad and the bullying is an act of revenge. It doesn't matter how it happens, the main point here is that it is a very serious issue many people are not prepared to deal with the consequences.

People who are victimized may be forced to move schools, or regions, change their phone numbers, address, email or social network accounts or become depressed. In extreme cases, victims have been driven to suicide. I believe this is a severe issue that we should prevent.

Annika

“I believe that
cyber-bullying is
among the cruelest
ways to make
someone feel
unwanted, alone
and inferior”

Acceptance

The pressure to be perfect

Parents should know that they play the largest role in their children's prejudices. Simple things such as homosexuality could be a major impact to the way a child could be raised.

I think parents should be supporting their children to discover their sexual orientation, not rejecting them as some parents have done in this society. Your child needs your support. They don't need you shipping them off to counselling and praying that they would be 'fixed' when they return home. Gay people are normal people. They don't need to be treated differently or outcast because they are different. This is what many parents are doing; they hope that this is just a phase which children go through.

That is wrong. Children should be taught to be confident and not to hate themselves because they like people of the same gender. There is nothing wrong with that.

I think most people are very tolerant and have no problem at all if people are gay but, and I hate to say this in a way because I expect it's going to cause controversy, but I think most parents would prefer their children not to be gay, knowing most parents want grandchildren if nothing else. It changes the way that sex education is going to be taught in schools.

Existing laws should allow same-sex couples to have church weddings. This

“Children should be taught to be confident and not to hate themselves because they like people of the same gender”

would make same-sex couples more confident and happy because that means people are finally accepting of them.

This is the reason why many children are homophobic these days. They are afraid to be bullied and repudiated among their own family and peers. Homophobia is not a laughing matter. It can sometimes have tragic consequences.

It's what we are underneath that matters.

Hannah

They need our support

Homophobia... What is it really? The fear of Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual and Transgender people (GLBT). **THE FEAR OF PEOPLE!** People who have noses and toes. People who have pumping hearts. People who love, who yearn to love. People who are probably scared, confused unsure about what they are feeling. They need support.

Almost two thirds of GLBT students suffer from homophobic bullying. Often they have no one to turn to or confide in. This means that kids are afraid to be themselves or show their true colours for fear of being teased or bullied.

Another issue surrounding homophobic school yard bullying is heterosexual people afraid to be who they are for fear of being called 'gay'. Girls become scared to participate in sports, boys avoid the school musical because these activities make you a so called 'a lesbian or gay.' There are two things wrong with this idea. Firstly no one should have to feel ashamed or embarrassed by what they love and are good at. The second is not every lesbian is covered in tattoos plays sport and rides a motorcycle, not every gay boy has a high-pitched voice, loves musical theatre and cares about fashion. These ridiculous stereotypes are what define homophobia in schools. 'Let's pick on the boy who wears hair gel and bow tie because he is definitely gay.' Quite often GLBT people are the people you least expect.

“If we could get parents to be supportive and appreciative of GLBT students then perhaps kids will emulate those views and we could reduce homophobic bullying inside and outside the school environment”

Sometimes the school environment can be very homophobic and restricting to a GLBT student. When I was in year six one of my friends (who was a boy) decided to wear a dress to school and have his hair in piggy tails. He borrowed my dress and when he walked out we got in so much trouble. We had to go to the principal's office and apologise. But the fact is he was just being himself and why should he not be allowed to wear a dress? We see cases like these every day. Boys not allowed to wear dresses or kiss the boy they want during school time. Girls not allowed to hold hands with the other girl they love. If people are becoming more and more socially appreciative of these emotions then why are some schools so far behind and unaccepting?

These days social media is playing a big part in homophobic bullying. 'That's so gay' 'You're so gay' 'he's so gay' 'huh gaaaay'. Last night I found all of these comments on my Facebook newsfeed. There is this idea especially in teenagers at present that makes the term 'gay' a derogatory term or an insult. If someone posts a photo that looks weird or someone is pulling a face this receives the comment 'that's so gay'. By saying that something is 'gay' whether or not intended to hurt can seriously offend the gay community.

What can parents do?

Parents play a really big role in a child's social views and opinions. A child who comes from a family who are

unaccepting of GLBT relationships are much more likely to be unsupportive and homophobic. If we could get parents to be supportive and appreciative of GLBT students then perhaps kids will emulate those views and we could reduce homophobic bullying inside and outside the school environment.

For parents of kids who are GLBT or who are trying to figure it all out, your job is to be supportive and make sure that your daughter or sons feels proud of whom they are and ensure that they don't feel so isolated they want to take their life. About 1 in 4 cases of homophobic bullying happens inside the person's own house. These are the parents who can't cope with the fact that their child likes the same sex. This statistic is completely absurd. If someone doesn't feel safe and comfortable in their own home with their own family then where else can they go?

I think an important step forwards is to make heterosexual children understand that heterosexuality isn't the only 'normal.' To make it known that whether you are Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual or Transgender you don't have an illness. You are just a human who needs support.

Alice

School

The judgemental society of high school

The judgmental society of high school becomes a lot for one to handle. The constant pressure and feeling of hiding who you really are because you are scared of what those around you might think of you. Feeling trapped and alone because you feel like you can't compare to those around you. Then the depression can sink in or other mental health problems and the added stress with the homework, tasks and assignments becoming too much for one to handle.

Acceptance becomes important in high school, a different change of atmosphere from primary school where everyone was your friend because it was a small compacted community. The feeling of trying to fit into the perfect image of a popular high school student takes a lot of emotions and physical work out of the individual.

More awareness should be taken into consideration because it may seem like an unimportant issue at times but to an individual it can sometimes overtake their lives. Even though most of us are surrounded by friends and are happy our friends accept us there is always a niggling feeling at the back of your consciousness that you should try to impress and fit in with the others around you or the 'in' crowd and maybe wanting a higher social status.

Sometimes you alter the way you dress, talk, walk and act to at least be accepted or thought of in a good way or awed like the 'in' crowd. Programs should be

“Family is forever
whereas school is
something you
leave”

made to show and tell students at high school to become more accepting of people no matter who they are and what they like.

We are all unique and we should be accepted no matter what, as those who don't might feel that they are not special and unworthy.

I think parents should also be aware that if their child is changing to fit in, they should talk to their child and ask if anything is bothering them. Families and parents showing they care can sometimes override the feeling of unworthiness and trying to fit in as showing that you care can make them aware that you will be there for them and they don't need to worry about changing to fit in. Family is forever whereas school is something you leave.

A less judgmental society would be better for everyone, it may be very hard to change but making people aware that others change to fit in might help alter the way they think and what they say.

Isabella

Homework should be banned

Students go to school six hours every day and do work for the majority of the time there; besides a twenty minute recess and forty minute lunch. I don't think we need any more work at home!

Myself and many people I know have out-of-school commitments like playing a sport or an instrument. I feel like school is all I think about and when I receive assignments and homework, I become so stressed out. Some students even have jobs and it's really hard to deal with school, homework, extra-curricular activities and work all at once.

I get way too much homework and it's really hard to get all of it done and hand everything in on time. At the moment I have a commerce assignment, photographic and digital media assignment, geography assignment and lots of maths homework. I play soccer outside of school every Sunday and have training twice a week. I also have a part-time job at McDonalds. My week consists of 120 hours, school taking up 30 of those hours, soccer taking up 3, my job taking 15 hours and I sleep for approximately 8 hours per night so that's 56 hours gone to just sleep! Altogether those things take up 104 hours of my week only leaving 16 hours for hobbies, family, friends and homework.

In conclusion, I don't have enough time for homework so I think we should ban it or give it out rarely.

Tara

“Some students even have jobs and it's really hard to deal with school, homework, extra-curricular activities and work all at once”

Assignments

I think we don't need so much assignments and assessment task all together in a short period of time.

Teachers always gives assignments, but they don't talk to each other, so the issues is all the assignments got bumped up, that means we have to do a lot of work in a very short period of time.

Teachers always give assignments in the middle or the end of the term, it's ok. But how about you need to hand in 2 or 3 assignments on the same day? Communication between teachers and student is important, communication between teachers and teachers is also important. Week 7 and Week 9 is the most week that assignments got bumped up, cause it's nearly end of the term. In this term we have 11 Weeks, during Week 7 we have to hand in assignments every day, and even the last week, Week 11, I still have to hand in 2 assignments on Monday Week 11, and also 2 on Wednesday. What do you think? You need to finish 4 assignments in 2 weeks' time. You might think that's a really long time, but you still get home work for other subjects during the 2 weeks' time.

So what do you think? Do you think this need to change? Time planning is an important thing, assignments is also a plan of learning.

Lisa

“Communication
between teachers
and student is
important,
communication
between teachers
and teachers is also
important”

Should school hours be moved back?

I firmly believe that based on information, the word of other teenagers and personal experience; our school hours should be moved back.

Waking up to the blaring alarm, the pitch black mornings, groggily dragging yourself out of bed only to spend another 6 hours trying to focus on hard and complex school work. This is incredibly hard for teenagers as puberty alters our biological clock. While pre-pubescent kids are programmed to sleep at 9:30 PM, adolescents turn out the lights at around 10:30 PM. This "signal" precedes bedtime by about an hour so many teenagers are not physiologically ready to sleep until 11:30 PM. Now imagine the daunting prospect of having to wake up at 6:00 in the morning! No one could stand that and then have to go and absorb enormous amounts of information and knowledge.

In the US, many schools around the country have adopted this change and studies have shown that when the kids walk in the gates at 9:00 AM their grades have improved from the 16% to 55%. It's common knowledge that the less hours a person sleeps their focus and concentration wanders.

Their grades are soaring over there, so why haven't we taken in this change yet? We have seen the results and the studies, what's stopping us?

There is one school in NSW that has followed the footsteps of the US. In

Wollongong, there is a school that is bright and alert – maybe this has to do with the fact that they have arrived to school at midday. At Edmund Rice College this is no specialty; they have been operating like this for 20 years! More schools are challenging the traditional times as they flexible timetables can maximise resources, provide more focus and attention to learning in the class, but most importantly; address the clash between school hours and a teenager's sleep cycle.

Did you know that adolescents who are sleep-deprived are more prone to anxiety and depression? These are the benefits: Adequate sleep, they contribute more in class, arrive late to school less often, miss fewer school days, visit nurses and counsellors less often, report less depression and irritability, have fewer car accidents travelling to school and have much less stress.

There is only one way to solve this, and from what I've said it seems fairly obvious. Move the hours back and we have a much more friendly and healthy environment. After all, isn't the main goal for teachers to educate and provide the best for our future?

Billie

Later school starting hours

For us high school students, a typical weekday morning consists of waking up at 6:45 and making the mad dash to school. By the time we have done 6 ½ hours of school and get home at 4pm we are too tired to complete the endless amounts of torturous homework. The solution to this chronic health problem of sleep deprivation is later school starting hours.

Teens need on average 9 ¼ hours of sleep per night to perform their best and for their health and brain development. Most teens average fewer than 7 hours by the time they finish high school. This is due to their hectic schedules and astronomical amounts of homework.

The result of this sleep deprivation means that we students are more likely to be involved in fall asleep car crashes, suffer emotional and behavioural issues, smoke and drink, decision making issues and lower academic excellence in school.

Mary A. Carskadon, PhD, Director of E.P. Bradley Hospital Research Laboratory believes that "Even without the pressure of biological changes, if we combine an early school starting time--say 7:30 am, which, with a modest commute, makes 6:15 am a viable rising time--with our knowledge that optimal sleep need is 9 ¼ hours, we are asking that 16-year olds go to bed at 9 pm.

Rare is a teenager that will keep such a schedule. School work, sports practices, clubs, volunteer work, and paid

“The solution to this chronic health problem of sleep deprivation is later school starting hours”

employment take precedence. When biological changes are factored in, the ability even to have merely 'adequate' sleep is lost," Carskadon explains. So, if there are no positives in this situation, why is nothing being done to solve all the negatives?

I propose that high schools across Australia should start at 9am and go until 3pm. This would enable students to have sufficient time to complete all homework as well as get a good night sleep. You, as adults have a responsibility to assist the future generations learn, grow and develop. We cannot though do this without adequate sleep and later school starting hours.

Nina

Trust

Loving means trusting

The trust that your children have for you is determined by how much trust you have for yourself, and if you have no trust for yourself or for the people around you, how can you possibly have any trust in your children? Trust is an important aspect of everyone's life, knowing that you can trust someone and that others around trust you is fulfilling and something we all hold close to our hearts. The truth is we couldn't live without it, the simple little word; trust.

It's important that you as parents have faith and trust us teenagers because without the most important people in our lives' trust, it can destroy our life mentally until there's nothing left but the light dust of our bodies' remains. I want my parents to know that keeping me on a tight leash is not healthy, it doesn't benefit anyone. It makes us feel insecure and as if our every move is watched and recorded under strict rules and boundaries. I want to know that I can build and maintain a close bond with you, but without your trust in me I feel that you're not there for me when I need you most, when I need someone to confide in and be my friend. All I want is for you to trust me just like I place all my trust in you, all I want is the same thing in return.

If you as parents do not hold the same amount of trust that your children have in you they are constantly battling against life and its intolerable ways. Us teenagers can't have that special bond and relationship we all crave with our

parents unless both sides are contributing and keeping the scales balanced. There is a saying "monkey see, monkey do", it explains that if a child sees that their parents have no trust in them it's more likely that they're going to pass the same trait down through the generations, after all our parents are the people who we learn most off of. If a child learns what trust is, it means that they can apply it with others.

Being an overprotective and strict parent is not necessarily beneficial. It can lead to depression and anxiety, meaning that we are more likely to bend the rules in the future because we will be old enough to make our own decisions without the constant distrust from parents. If we know that there is trust between both of us, it's easier to become more open towards you whenever we are in need. Trust in each other is one of the most important traits. It makes the warmth and happiness in a relationship that binds each other together. It's one of the most important aspects in a teenager's life; to be trusted and given faith by my parents and knowing that you are proud is untouchable because I have the chance to develop more confidence in myself. If you don't set an example of trust, how am I meant to learn how to trust anyone? Showing love through trust might just be the most positive characteristic one can share.

Jody-Joy

We don't all fit the stereotypes

The media today controls what we see, what we hear and what we know, and the media is generally what creates many of the stereotypes we see about people. The media today only publicises the bad things teenagers do, so parents then think that this is what all teenagers are like. Because they are never made aware of the good things that teenagers do, they think all teenagers are the same and all do inappropriate behaviour.

The media can pick and choose what it wants to make the public aware of, and for the most part they only draw attention to the bad things. Teenagers today are a lot different to the teenagers when our parents were in that category, so I believe they use the media as a basis for their knowledge as to how teenagers behave. This is completely unfair to those teenagers, like myself and my friends, who do not take part in these activities. Really, it is only a minority of teenagers who do these kinds of inappropriate activities, such as partying, drinking or taking drugs, but because this is all the parents really hear about, they believe that they are the majority.

Parents are not brought to the attention of the good things that teenagers do, such as raising money for charities, helping out people in their communities and spending time to study and do homework. For the most part, all the well behaved children really want to do with their friends is go see a movie or just hang out like friends do. The media has twisted society's views on teenagers

“It is only a minority of teenagers who do these inappropriate activities, such as partying, drinking or taking drugs”

so much that some parents don't let their children just go down to South Bank or to a movie, because they don't trust them.

The distrust in families can create a really unhealthy and uncomfortable environment to live in. It can cause fights between parents and children which can lead to unhealthy relationships. Parents need to know their children and what they are capable of doing. Most children wouldn't be able to do the things they see on the news, because of their morals and because they would do anything not to see the look of disappointment on their parents' faces. That is the punishment that nearly all children fear the most. When you have done something wrong, and all you parents

can do is look at you silently, shaking their head, not believing their child was capable of doing something like this.

So instead of doing these things, these teenagers would study hard, try their best in school to do their parents proud and when going out with friends, would keep the activities reasonable and legal.

These teenagers, however, are the ones being mistrusted, because of the

inappropriate behaviours of others. Parents need to understand their own children's behaviour, and not judge by what they see in the media. Parents need to realise that not every teenager is the same and by trusting and knowing their child, they are helping to create a nice, family environment and helping their child gain responsibility.

Grace

Trust me on Facebook

Hi mum, I'd just like to let you know I'm aware of you logging onto my Facebook to check on things like pictures and statuses appearing on my wall or the type of friends that I have on there, or even to look through the messages in my inbox which are private for my own eyes.

I have friends with parents that don't even know they have their own Facebook, or even have their parents Facebook blocked so they're not able to check on it. But I don't know anyone with their parents going through their privacy like you do. I may say inappropriate things here and there or post pictures of myself but isn't this expected as a teenager?

I understand if you want to be friends with me, seeing which friends I have so you're sure I'm not adding any unusual

random people, or even casually like my photos or like my statuses, but you're not able to trust your own daughter, online.

A lot of my friends who know about this ask how I feel about it. I don't think it should be allowed for you to be able to know if I'm talking about my friends gossiping, or talking about homework. Your Facebook has no concern to me and I think you should feel the same way. Actually, I've talked to you about this and it didn't seem like you cared about my thoughts and opinions, but more on yourself and what you feel like is right.

I'm letting you know my opinion and maybe you will listen this time. My Facebook is definitely safe without your supervision.

Borym

I'm a good boy, please trust me

Hi mum and dad, I want to tell you something about me.

You can trust me to go to the party. You can trust me because I am a good kid. I don't drink alcohol, I don't do drugs, and I don't smoke. It's not healthy for me because it will damage my brain. It's not just me it can damage more kid's brains. My friends don't drink or smoke, we all like to dance and have some fun.

If you trust me to do the right thing I will promise to be good.

Thank you mum and dad.

Joe

Joe (name changed) is a 16-year-old newly settled refugee. This took him an hour to write with a volunteer who helped him with his spelling and punctuation. This was retyped exactly as it was hand written.

Trust

Yesterday my dad was on my Facebook account. And he saw a guy commented on my photo, then he check out his profile and ask me who is he. I told he is my friend den. He said he's not in your class. Then I got angry on my dad and said he's my friend, very very good friend. And there is another thing I want to share with you guys, my dad don't let me go home by Sydney trains because he thinks that I am committed with a guy and I met him on trains.

I want to say trust your kids, trust on the way you have raised them. They know what is right for them. The teenagers are now big enough to decide about their lives and I am sure they are going to choose a right thing for them in their lives. So please trust your kids and believe in them.

Kashish

“I want to say trust
your kids, trust on
the way you have
raised them”

I don't choose friends for their skin colour

Recently I've noticed that you've begun to have an issue with some of my friends. I find it kind of weird how you sometimes question me on who I sit with at lunch, have to always know who it is I go shopping with, and don't let me go to another person's house without supervision.

I'm not a very social person at the best of times, and you not letting me hang out with people really isn't helping. We always have little arguments before each and every outing I have with friends, and it's getting a bit exhausting.

I don't really know why you always protest, when I only go to a party around once a year; it's really unfair. I had no idea why you were so opposed to it, but then we had that huge argument and you kind of told me why.

You said that I only chose friends who were from the same ethnical background as me, which I don't. You have never met most of my friends, so how would you know? My school is very multicultural, and I do see friendship groups that are all Caucasian, or all Asian, but that's not me. I have friends of almost every ethnicity and background in the school. I don't choose friends for their skin colour! Why would I? It's not like we talk about culture at school much anyway.

I choose people because I honestly like them. My friends are people who I get along with, who have the same interests as me. Just because some of them

“I'm not a very social person at the best of times, and you not letting me hang out with people really isn't helping”

are the same ethnicity as me is nothing but a coincidence.

I understand that you don't want me to be all closed-minded and only talk to one type of person. I get it, and I thank you for raising me like that, so I can be friends with people of all cultures, but you have to trust me that I know why you raised me like that, and that I agree with you. I guess it's kind of my fault, since I mentioned their ethnicity at all; maybe you got the impression that it mattered to me. Maybe if you met some of my other friends, you would see that it doesn't.

Alisha

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