

Twenty Something

By: Christine Vander Wielen, M.S.W., CAPSW

When I was in high school, I remember quite vividly wanting to be in my twenties. I would dream about the life I would have and all the things I would do, all the people I would meet, and all the adventures I would experience. Some days I could almost taste the freedom. Like others before me, once I got to my twenties, life took on a very different picture than what I first imagined. Life was much harder than I thought.

The twenties can be described as a time of great transitions. One of the major transitions often occurs in the relationship between the young adult and his/her parents. It is common for young adults to be excited about and look forward to leaving home while at the same time being afraid of moving out on their own. There can be a mixture of an over-glamorized view of independence and fear of “what if it does not work out?” During this time, it is common for parents of twenty something year-olds to be going through their own time of transition. Parents may want their child launched and living independently while simultaneously being fearful their adult child is moving too far away physically and emotionally. Parents may struggle with how much to be involved in their adult child’s life. Sometimes young adults can fall into the trap of “know-it-all” and will not accept any input from parents. Meanwhile, parents can fall into the trap of trying to maintain control and providing too much input. As a new norm for the relationship is being established, there may be tension.

For twenty-something-year-olds, peer relationships may also change. While in school, students often have a ready-made peer group. However, as the young adult moves on, the peer group becomes more spread out geographically, and it can be more difficult to find peers with similar interests. Some young adults may feel lonely or feel left behind when this happens.

Twenty-something-year-olds moving out on their own for the first time may experience financial stress. Sometimes those secure high-paying jobs that we dreamed about are just that – a dream. It is not uncommon for there to be stress as young adults become responsible for their own bills and taking care of their own financial needs.

So how can we help? Many times young adults need encouragement and the freedom to venture out on their own. They need their independence to be respected even if we disagree with their choices. If they fail, they need affirmation and understanding and not, “I told you so.” They often do not need to be rescued from the trials and tribulations of this stage. But rather, young adults need encouragement and reassurance that this stage can be negotiated successfully and the freedom to blaze their own trail. Bumps in the road can lead to further growth.

Compliments of Practical Family Living, Inc.

P.O. Box 1676, Appleton, WI 54912 (920) 720-8920

You are permitted and encouraged to reproduce and distribute our articles in any format provided that you credit the author, no modifications are made, you do not charge a fee beyond the cost of reproduction, and you include Practical Family Living's web-site address (<http://www.pfl.org>) on the copied resource. Quotations from any article are also permitted with credit to the author and citing the web-site. Any use of other materials on this web-site, including reproduction, modification, distribution or republication, without the prior written consent of Practical Family Living, Inc., is strictly prohibited.