

FOCUS ON FAMILY

# Teenagers today have more dangers to avoid

QUESTION: Everyone talks about how rebellious teens are today. I don't believe my parents went through this kind of anxiety when my sisters and I were young. We were all relatively happy and none of us rebelled. Am I right in assuming that a good family life was easier to achieve in those days?



**Dr. James Dobson**

DR. DOBSON: I'm sure your memory is generally correct despite the exceptions we can all recall. The majority of parents in the past spent less energy worrying about their children. They had other things on their minds.

I remember talking to my dad about this subject a few

years before his death. Our children were young at the time and I, like you, was feeling the heavy responsibility of raising them properly. I turned to my father and asked, "Do you remember worrying about me when I was a kid? Did you think about all the things that could go wrong as I came through the adolescent years? How did you feel about these pressures associated with being a father?"

Dad was rather embarrassed by my question. He smiled sheepishly and said, "Honestly, Bo," (his pet name for me) "I never really gave that a thought."

How do we explain his lack of concern? Was it because he didn't love me or because he was an uninvolved parent? No. He was a wonderful father throughout my childhood. Instead, his answer reflected the time in which I grew up. People worried about the Depression that was just ending, the war with

Germany and Japan, and later the Cold War with Russia. They did not invest much effort in hand-wringing over their children ... at least not until some kind of problem developed. Trouble was not anticipated.

And why not? Because there were fewer land mines for kids in that era. I attended high school during the "Happy Days" of the 1950s, and I never saw or even heard of anyone taking an illegal drug. It happened, I suppose, but it was certainly no threat to me. Some students liked to get drunk, but alcohol was not a big deal in my social environment. Others played around with sex, but the girls who did were considered "loose" and were not respected. Virginity was still in style for males and females. Occasionally a girl came up pregnant, but she was packed off in a hurry and I never knew where she went. As for homosexuals and lesbians, a few students were open

about their lifestyle, but I didn't know them personally. There were certainly no posters on our bulletin boards advertising Gay Pride Month or Condom Week. Most of my friends respected their parents, went to church on Sunday, studied hard enough to get by and lived a fairly clean life. There were exceptions, of course, but this was the norm.

Today's kids, by contrast, are walking through the Valley of the Shadow! Drugs, sex, alcohol, rebellion and alternative lifestyles are everywhere. Those dangers have never been so evident as they are now, and the worst may be yet to come.

QUESTION: When do children begin to develop a sexual nature? Does this occur suddenly during puberty?

DR. DOBSON: No, it occurs long before puberty. Perhaps the most important concept suggested by Freud was his observation that

children are not asexual. He stated that sexual gratification begins in the cradle and is first associated with feeding. Behavior during childhood is influenced considerably by sexual curiosity and interest, although the happy hormones do not take full charge until early adolescence. Thus, it is not uncommon for a 4-year-old to be interested in nudity and the sexual apparatus of the opposite sex.

The elementary school years are an important time in the forming of sexual attitudes. Parents should be careful not to express shock

and disgust over this kind of curiosity, even though they have to disapprove of exploratory behavior. It is believed that many sexual problems begin as a result of inappropriate training during early childhood.

Dr. Dobson is president of the nonprofit organization Focus on the Family, P.O. Box 444, Colorado Springs, CO, 80903; or www.family.org. Questions and answers are excerpted from "The Complete Marriage and Family Home Reference Guide," published by Tyndale House.

## GRANDPARENTING: A FAMILY FORUM

### Grand daughter irresponsible with money



**Dee & Tom Hardie**

Dear Dee and Tom: Our family has a serious problem. Our only child has three children, all in their 30's. Two are married, well adjusted and clear-headed, and know how to handle money, but the third is completely out-of-touch: she is single, lives dangerously and has no feeling for money and the necessity of earning and saving it.

We are writing new wills and want to leave some money to each of our three grands. We would prefer to treat them all alike, but fear that if we leave money direct to this particular girl, she will only waste it and rush right through it. What should we do? — Anxious, Fallon, Nev.

Dear Anxious: Yes, this is "serious." We don't know all the facts, or the children involved. We can emphasize that you must be careful, and should first consult her parents. Much depends on just how unsteady this girl might be. The ideal solution would be to develop a perfectly level playing field, with all three grands inheriting equally. However, if her problem is really serious, you might put her equal share into an irrevocable trust. She would receive monthly checks, and could not touch the capital without approval of the trustee, following a real emergency. If she complains that she's not getting her share outright, you'll have to stand firm and not concede to her wishes. David Meese, our friend and financial advisor, points

out that a trust can present a problem down the road, for the situation might change drastically. For example, this girl might wake up and mend her ways. He quotes an old estate planning term, "Ruling with a dead hand should be avoided."

You and the parents must sit down quietly and discuss the pros and cons, and then get professional legal and estate planning advice, hopefully from people who know the family and this particular now-wayward girl.

#### GRAND REMARK OF THE WEEK

Dear Dee and Tom: I was amused by your recent column about the Rt. Rev. Krister Stendhal, of Cambridge, Mass., Lutheran Bishop Emeritus of Stockholm, Sweden. He wrote: "I have become even more convinced of the theological necessity of irony — and of its nobler cousin, humor... I believe that to be a reason why Jesus chose to speak in parables, most of which have a humorous twist."

This reminds me of what the Episcopal Bishop of South West Virginia once said: "God must have a sense of humor; otherwise,

how do you explain the hippopotamus?" — Dick Buck, Lutherville, Md.

Our contributor, a graduate of the University of Virginia, and Joan, his wife of 56 years, often used humor to raise three children successfully, and now to help out with four

grands. Dee and Tom, married more than 50 years, have eight grandchildren. They welcome questions, suggestions and Grand Remarks of the Week. Send to P.O. Box 34, Butler, MD 21023. Or e-mail them at grandparenting(at)aol.com.

#### CLOSE TO HOME



Concerned that she would be passed over for a promotion if management knew she was pregnant, Donna concealed the fact.

#### POOCH CAFE



#### STONE SOUP



### This Week's Crossword Puzzle

|    |   |   |    |    |   |   |   |    |    |    |    |    |    |
|----|---|---|----|----|---|---|---|----|----|----|----|----|----|
| 1  | 2 | 3 | 4  | 5  | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9  | 10 | 11 | 12 | 13 |    |
| 14 |   |   |    | 15 |   |   |   |    | 16 |    |    |    |    |
| 17 |   |   | 18 |    |   |   |   | 19 |    |    |    |    |    |
| 20 |   |   | 21 |    |   |   |   | 22 |    |    |    |    |    |
| 23 |   |   | 24 |    |   |   |   | 25 |    |    |    |    |    |
| 26 |   |   | 27 |    |   |   |   | 28 |    |    | 30 | 31 | 32 |
| 33 |   |   | 34 |    |   |   |   | 35 |    |    |    |    |    |
| 36 |   |   | 37 |    |   |   |   | 38 |    |    | 39 |    |    |
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| 50 |   |   | 51 |    |   |   |   | 52 |    |    | 53 | 54 | 55 |
| 56 |   |   | 57 |    |   |   |   | 58 |    |    | 59 |    |    |
| 60 |   |   | 61 |    |   |   |   | 62 |    |    |    |    |    |
| 63 |   |   | 64 |    |   |   |   | 65 |    |    |    |    |    |

- Across**
1. \_ Drescher, Joy in The Beautician and the Beast.
  5. Mild oath.
  10. 1985 film starring Cher.
  14. \_ Olin, Josephine in Chocolat.
  15. Third digits of the hands.
  16. \_ Gruning, Mrs. Leuchtag in Casablanca.
  17. 1996 film starring Will Smith.
  20. \_ It Forward.
  21. Yours, Mine & \_.
  22. Person related on mother's side.
  23. \_ Postlethwaite, Holabird in Amistad.
  24. Units of weight in India.
  26. Treat with air.
  29. Wide opening.
  30. \_ Marie Saint, Nell in Raintree Country.
  33. A \_ Is Born.
  34. \_ Nicolodi, Laura in Macaroni.
  35. .001 of an inch.
  36. Played Aurora in Terms of Endearment.
  40. South American three-toed sloths.
  41. Pertaining to birds.
  42. Father of Manawydan.
  43. \_ Age, 2002 film featuring voice of Ray Romano.
  44. Bob \_ , comedian who had a cameo in Joe Dirt.
  45. Reduce to liquid again.
  47. Saclike respiratory organ.
  48. \_ Sorvino, Linda in Mighty Aphrodite.
  49. Bob & \_ Ted & Alice.
  52. Sound, healthy.
  53. Light, flightless, ratite bird.
  56. 1995 film starring Nicholas Cage.
  60. Border formed by a fillet.
  61. Toughen; harden.
  62. Hoglike mammal of New Guinea.
  63. Colored hair.
  6. \_ Who's Coming to Dinner?
  66. Raised.
- Down**
1. \_ Wilson, the reverend in Uptown Saturday Night.
  2. \_ Sofer, Rachel in Keeping the Faith.
  3. \_ Garcia, Terry in Ocean's Eleven.
  4. No; not.
  5. Outbreak.
  6. Type or class.
  7. Increases in number.
  8. To \_ For.
  9. 2003 film starring Ving Rhames.
  10. Demeanors.
  11. Alan \_ , Eddie in Betsy's Wedding.
  12. Three-handed 32-card game.
  13. Danny \_ , Phil in White Christmas.
  18. Bard.
  19. Plants of the grass family.
  23. Young salmon.
  24. Thermoplastic resin used in packaging films.
  25. Long poetic composition.
  26. "Very" in music.
  27. Set of rules of conduct.
  28. Lift up.
  29. Grape of the Beaujolais region.
  30. 2003 film starring Ian McKellan.
  31. Andy Warhol A Clockwork Orange remake.
  32. Submarine \_.
  34. \_ Young.
  37. Sky-blue color.
  38. \_ Rachel Wood, Tracy in Thirteen.
  39. \_ Taylor, British silent screen star.
  45. Washes lightly.
  46. Jewish Sabbath.
  47. The Spy Who \_ Me.
  48. Circular volcanic landforms.
  49. Lump or mass.
  50. Ethereal.
  51. Abnormal respiratory rattle.
  52. Errol \_ , George in Murder One.
  53. Impetuous flood.
  54. Tyler \_ , Sabretooth in X-Men.
  55. \_ People, film starring 36 across.
  57. Dress with a pick.
  58. Oxlike African antelope.
  59. \_ Tide, Frances Farmer's only Technicolor film.
- See inside this week's paper for answers.

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