

Teenage Years

People who are nostalgic about childhood, were obviously never children. Few people can remember the truth about adolescence. Their minds "censor" their memories; and have them believe that being a teenager was was one big party, free of cares and responsibilities. Well let me say this, you couldn't be more wrong if you had a lobotomy. There aren't that many adults around who realise what adolescence was really like. The anguish, the fear, the anxiety, the stress. People don't remember those problems because they want to forget them.

The truth of the matter is, is that being a teenager is hard, right from the beginning, and it doesn't get any easier. We are such easy prey for big name companies who advertise using the pressure of popularity, looks and sex to force us to buy their product that, as it turns out, we never wanted or needed in the first place. Our lives are filled with stress. One of the greatest sources of pressure is school. Where we are herded like cattle from room to room, chewing on our cud, while the hay of knowledge is force fed to us as we are trying our hardest to gulp it down as more and more is shovelled in. Another great source of pressure is ourselves. We try our hardest to be accepted among a certain group or circle. Whereas most of the time we are rejected and we become depressed. Depression, another problem, along with ignorance and apathy that thwarts our lives. A wise man when questioned about his view on ignorance and apathy, said "I don't know, and I don't give a damn.

We find outlets for our emotions through either art, poetry or music, being the three most common. There are thousands of poems floating around written by bitter or depressed teenagers that are never recognised as works of art. Another form of escape for teenagers is, unfortunately, suicide. It is alarming how high the teen suicide rates have risen over the past decade. Yet, it is comforting that there are support groups and counsellors available now to aid teens through their troubles. Because no one wants to see a life full of promise and potential end abruptly because of a little sorrow in one kid's life. Another reason for teen suicide is their home life. The teenager gets caught in the middle of an argument between their parents, and they take the blame personally. This is not right. Sometimes the child is beaten or abused and is forced to run away into the streets, where they become homeless, and sometimes abducted. Sometimes they just die in a back alley during a cold winter's night, and they are never missed. At sixteen, a teenager knows about suffering, because he himself has suffered, but he barely knows that other beings also suffer.

Although, some teenagers face their problems. They plod along through school. Some of them get after-school or weekend jobs. They learn responsibility. Eventually, they enter adulthood and the work force. Successful, confident, and eager to work. They lead their lives using the knowledge they swallowed throughout their

education and the power they gained. But not long after, they forget about the dips and drops of their adolescence and become somewhat hypocritical when they go up to teenagers and say "These are the best years of your life", or "What responsibility? You've got it easy". These lines are heard much too often.

Hopefully, it can only get easier for teenagers to cope with the world and to live to their full potential. Where a teenager can wade through the jaws of advertisers, the popularity contest, their parents, and most of all, depression's cold claws. For, up until now, it never occurred to anyone anywhere that the teenager was a captive in a hostile world of adults.
