

TEENAGERS' GUIDE TO THE ADULT WORLD

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YOUR CHILDHOOD AND TEENAGE YEARS ARE PREPARATION FOR ADULTHOOD

You are in training to be an adult. Everything you do, play, school and after school activities are training for adulthood. If you are having problems with the adults in your life, it is because you act as if you were trying to stretch out your childhood.

FREEDOM

From your point of view, adulthood is freedom to do what you please. So to you, it may seem that they are trying to prevent you from the freedoms you should have.

From adult point of view, it is the freedom to work where you can get hired, to live where you can afford to live and to eat what you can afford to buy.

THE FUTURE IS CLOSER THAN YOU THINK

You barely have 6 years between elementary school and being considered a young adult. Are you prepared to get and keep a job, make enough to get your own place and feed yourself? Did your parents tell you that it's OK for you to remain a child till you are 30 years old and that you can live with them until then? Will you live with your friends? Did they say they'd support you until you are ready to become self-sufficient? Have you looked at cost of apartments? Have you checked the cost of food? How much money will it take for you to live comfortably? What are you trained to do that will give you that kind of take home pay? Yes, remember to take the taxes off before you make your calculations on spending money.

YOU'RE GOING TO DESIGN VIDEOGAMES

Very well, let's start now. You must have had some ideas for games. If not, think of one.

You have your idea, good. How are you going to make it happen? Do you know the newest techniques on videogame design? If not, do you know where to learn them? Find out how to get to know the people who do it, find out how they got into the field. What skills do you need? What knowledge is required? Can you get it at your school?

Seems overwhelming? Of course it does! Should you give up? No. Why should you? Right now, you don't have to worry about food, shelter or clothing. This is the best time to figure out how to make your dreams happen not when you are on your own, struggling to survive.

PICKING A CAREER

It really does not matter if you end up being a videogame designer or not. You might decide that it is not something you want after all. However, now you will have the experience of finding out how to go about making your dreams happen.

The best way to find out about a job is to ask a lot of people who are already doing the job. That means that you will have to be brave and contact people in your field of choice and politely ask questions. Just explain that you are trying to make a career choice for your future and wanted to find out what their job is really like and what skills and training you need to be good at it. It is bad manners to ask people how much they make. You can find that information in the wanted ads in the paper.

Yes it will be hard at first and awkward. Some people will be too busy to talk to you and some will take a long time and give you lots of good information and encouragement. Write your questions on a piece of paper before you make the calls. This way, if you get embarrassed and forget, they will be in front of you. As you make the calls. You will notice that it is getting easier with each call. Your delivery will improve and your nervousness will melt away.

FIRST JOB

Putting off getting that first job for fear that you don't know how to fill out the application and you don't know what questions they will ask? There are lots of books in the library and at the local bookstore. But you can Google "job interview" and get lots of helpful hints.

If you tend to be nervous in interactions, and there is a job you really want, practice interviewing for jobs you don't care that much about. That means that you fill out applications for jobs that are not your dream jobs and go to those interviews. Two things will happen. You will be accustomed to getting interviewed, and you will come across better at your dream job interview. If they give your dream job to someone else, you might get another job which you interviewed for. Once there, you might find that you like working there.

Give it 3 months. If you still hate it, get another job.

WORK HISTORY

Employers look at the work history on your application or resume to determine if you are a potentially good worker. A smart employer will always check your references. Would you hire someone who lies on his or her application? Would you expect them to be a good worker? Would you

want to hire a bad worker? Would you want to hire someone who says he wants to work for you for the next few years but has only worked 3 months or less at each job they had? Would you expect that person to really stay past the training period?

Employers expect to give you flexible hours and less pay, if you are working around a full time school schedule. These employers do not expect you to stay with them when you finish school.

The best advice I can give you is to stay at a job until you find another one. When you change jobs, always do it to increase your earning power or reduce your commute time.

DEALING DRUGS

So you decided that all this sucks, and it is too much work for not enough money so you'll just sell drugs. So you like going to juvenile-hall, jail and prison? That's the future you want for yourself - to be behind bars waiting for someone to bring you your meal?

Oh, I see. You have it all figured out. You won't get caught.

Well actually, the jails and prisons are full of people who had it all figured out. Even so, they managed to get themselves arrested and put in jail. There, they scheme with other equally smart people on how to avoid arrest in the future. But they keep going back.

So, is that the kind of life you want for yourself - in and out of jail and prison? Until when, when you're 40 years old?

Does that really sound easier than learning a trade or getting a job or going to college?

IS YOUR LIFE STRESSING YOU OUT?

Read the handout on [Stress Management](#).

IF THE ADULTS IN YOUR LIFE AND THIS HANDOUT DID NOT HELP YOU - SEEK COUNSELING